# CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FRESHMAN STUDENTS AT THE COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA – FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA POHNPEI CAMPUS

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Central Luzon State University, Science City of Muňoz, Nueva Ecija, Philippines
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION**
**(Educational Management)**

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## APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis entitled **CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FRESHMAN STUDENTS AT THE COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA–FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA, POHNPEI CAMPUS,** prepared and submitted by **PABLO H. LAMSIS, JR.,** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION** (Educational Management) is hereby accepted.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Pablo H. Lamsis, Jr. was born on July 6, 1956 in Baguio City. He attended elementary school at Philex Mines Elementary School in Philex Mines, Tuba, Benguet and graduated in 1969. He completed high school at Kasibu Barangay High School, Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya in 1975. Prior to entering college, he took a two-year diploma course at Manaoag Technical School and went on to enroll and graduate with a degree of Bachelor of Science in Industrial Education at Nueva Vizcaya State University.

Pablo began his career as an industrial supervisor at a mining firm in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman in 1982. He was offered a job to teach in one of Oman's premiere technical training centers in 1994 where he indulged himself in a work-and-study program earning qualifications from National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) as NVQ Assessor and Internal Verifier from the Engineering and Marine Training Authority (EMTA), United Kingdom in 1997. These qualifications spurred his desire to further his studies and decided to enroll in a graduate program offered by Central Luzon State University.

At present, Pablo resides with his family in Dupax del Sur, Nueva Vizcaya and still continues to teach at the College of Micronesia-FSM, Pohnpei Campus.

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**PABLO H. LAMSIS, JR.**

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## ABSTRACT

**LAMSIS, PABLO, JR. H.,** Open University, Central Luzon State University, Science City of Munoz, Nueva Ecija, Philippines, April, 2010. **CORRELATES OF FRESHMAN STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AT THE COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA-FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA POHNPEI CAMPUS.**

Adviser**: FLOR AMOR B. MONTA, Ph.D.**

The study aimed to correlate the performance of Pohnpei Campus freshman students in the College of Micronesia-Federated States of Micronesia during the fall semester 2009 to students' socio-demographic characteristics, parents'/ guardians' socio-demographic characteristics, and school characteristics.

The Student Survey Questionnaire gathered data from 98 respondents. Secondary data were also obtained. The Grade Point Average (GPA) at the end of the fall semester 2009 was used as the measure of academic performance. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, percentage, standard deviation, and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation were used to analyze the data.

Results revealed that freshman students were predominantly with the mean age of 19 years old. Majority (72.5%) of them belonging to a big family with the mean number of children in the family at six, 79.6% were later born children, having low levels of

English language (90.8%), Math (57.1%), and 91% admitted to the certificate programs of study. The average educational attainment of parents/guardians was at high school level, working on blue-collared jobs, and having annual income of less than 10,000 US$. Students perceived that their parents encouraged them to pursue higher education, helped them in their assignments, provided them proper discipline, understood financial aid procedures, and were neutral when it comes to their parents' attendance to college functions and activities.

Students indicated that they sometimes used the available college services and facilities, were somewhat satisfied, and considered the educational resources and facilities as somewhat important. Moreover, students agreed to all statements in the questionnaire describing faculty performance.

Correlation analysis revealed that math placement score, educational attainment of parents/guardians, satisfaction and importance in student health services, and frequency of use and importance of science laboratories (science labs, trade and technology labs/workshops combined) correlated with students' academic performance. Students' perceptions on the courses/subjects that they attended at the college of being well organized and well taught also correlated with their academic performance. Implications for further research were discussed.

## INTRODUCTION

Studies performed by Villanda, Latogan, and Romero (2009) stated that academic performance is an index of learning. Etulle (1995) defined academic performance as that which refers to knowledge acquired and skill developed as indicated by the grade computed and evaluated by the teacher. Moreover, Belsa (2000) defined academic performance as a measured performance of an individual in school brought about or as a result of his/her intelligence which includes ability to think, reason out, analyze and solve problems.

A vast amount of studies had been conducted to identify factors that influence academic performance. These researches revealed that academic performance is not only a product of intelligence but also of other factors found in the environment. Segnaben (1996) noted that academic performance is brought about by the interplay of different factors including intelligence, habits, motives, attitudes and personality. Basaen (1991) concluded that there is a significant relationship between need for achievement and academic performance among students. Her findings showed that achievement, motivation, and intelligence influence academic performance; hence, both potential and effort are related to one's academic achievement.

To achieve the desired goals in education, it is important to study in-depth details these contributing factors and how these factors associate or correlate to academic performance.

Specifically, the study conceptualized that academic performance is influenced by the socio-demographic characteristics of students, parents, and school characteristics

## Statement of the Problem

For the past several years, education in the College of Micronesia (COM) - Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is growing with its mission: "Historically diverse, uniquely Micronesian and globally connected, COM-FSM is a continuously improving student-centered institute of higher education. The college is committed to assisting in the development of the FSM by providing academic, career and technical educational opportunities for student learning"(COM-FSM Catalogue, 2007-2009).

During the COM-FSM President's Retreats in 2007, 2008, and 2009, two (2) institutional priorities were highlighted: (1) success and retention rates of students at the college which is less than forty percent (40%) and (2) academic level of the majority of incoming students which is inadequate to meet college level standards.

Based on available data from the COM-FSM Institutional Research and Planning Office (COM-FSM IRPO, 2007), graduation rate of students from both National and Pohnpei campuses were on its downtrend. In 1999, only 25% graduated. In 2000 graduation rate went down to 17%; but went up in 2001 to 28%. But from 2002, it started low at 16% then gradually plunged to13% in 2003 and in 2004 graduation rate was at its worst of only 8%. Retention rate was also affected with this rise and fall scenario as taken from the 2003-2006 cohorts from all campuses. During the Fall Semester 2003, 54.75% of students returned to college. In the year 2004, 54.25% of students were retained. In 2005, retention rate went up to 60.75% and in 2006, COM-FSM suffered its lowest retention rate at 46.25%.

Despite the presence of the US-based financial aid (Pell Grant) and some other financial resources which majority of Micronesian college-bound students avail of to assist them in completing their college degrees and/or certificates, there are existing problems that most participants of the COM-FSM President's Retreats in 2007, 2008, and 2009 reiterated such as high drop-out / non-completion rate of students, poor student recruitment practices, unprepared students, and the need for parents to be educated on the value of their children's education.

Apparently, most of the issues mentioned stemmed from the three main characters played by the students, parents, and the school or college in particular. The researcher experienced these challenges whilst working as a faculty member at COM-FSM Pohnpei Campus since 2005 and heard similar experiences from COM-FSM colleagues when they shared their experiences during the COM-FSM President's Retreats of 2007, 2008, and 2009. The lack of research in this area spurred the researcher's interest to study this subject to get insights on how these correlates may improve freshman students' academic performance.

## Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to determine the factors that correlate to the academic performance of freshman students at the College of Micronesia-FSM, Pohnpei Campus during the Fall Semester, 2009. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How may the freshman students' socio-demographic characteristics be described in terms of age, gender, birth order, number of children in the family, English language placement score, Mathematics placement score, and College of Micronesia –FSM Entrance Test (COMET) score?;
2. How may the freshman students' parents'/guardians' socio-demographic characteristics be described in terms of educational attainment of parents/guardians, annual family income, occupation of parents and guardians, and parental or guardians' support in students' education?;
3. What are the students' perceptions on school characteristics in terms of school's educational resources and facilities (according to frequency of use, satisfaction, and its importance), and teaching performance of faculty members?;
4. Is there a relationship between students' socio-demographic characteristics and academic performance?;
5. Is there a relationship between parents'/guardians' socio-demographic characteristics and academic performance?; and
6. Is there a relationship between school characteristics and academic performance?

## Hypotheses of the Study

The following are the null hypotheses of the study:

1) There is no relationship between freshman students' socio-demographic characteristics and academic performance;

2) There is no relationship between parents'/guardians' socio-demographic characteristics and academic performance; and
3) There is no relationship between school characteristics and academic performance.

## Significance of the Study

This study focused on describing the selected variables of students' socio-demographic characteristics, parents'/guardians' socio-demographic characteristics, and school characteristics that were assumed to correlate with freshman students' academic performance in the COM-FSM, Pohnpei Campus.

For the College of Micronesia-FSM, a better understanding of the variables to be studied in this research should be beneficial. This will provide information useful in answering inquiries of college administrators, faculty, parents, students, stakeholders, and the general public regarding the academic performance of students. Additionally, identifying which variables are most related with academic performance and success of students allows inquiries regarding academic progress, retention, and other academic issues to be addressed knowledgeably and factually.

For college administrators and policy-makers, this study could provide information to rationalize the implementation of policy in shaping the mission and vision of the college (Inocencio, 1997).

For teachers and counselors, this study can make them realize their contribution in building the academic life of students. This will pave the way to make improvements in their way of teaching, advising, and deciding what's best for students (Inocencio, 1997).

For parents, to become aware of on their influence regarding academic performance of their children (Inocencio, 1997)

For students, findings of this study will give them a better view of the importance of good academic background and performance as pre-requirements for college academic preparedness (Inocencio, 1997).

Finally, this study hopes to pave way for other investigators / researchers in continuing the endless search for improving student academic performance in higher education.

## Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study concentrated only on selected students' socio-demographic characteristics, parents'/guardians' socio-demographic characteristics, and school factors of freshman students at COM-FSM, Pohnpei Campus for Fall semester 2009. This study covered only the full-time freshman students enrolled at the College of Micronesia-FSM, Pohnpei Campus in the Fall Semester 2009. As the study focused only on COM-FSM, Pohnpei Campus, the results of this study may not be generalized to other COM-FSM campuses or other educational institutions. The study depended on the availability of students' records from the Students Information System (SIS) of the Institute of Research and Planning Office (IRPO) COM-FSM, National Campus and at the Office of Admission and Records (OAR), College of Micronesia-FSM, Pohnpei Campus that provided the secondary data.

In addition, this was a non-subjective and non-intrusive type of research that dealt with records and documents supported by student survey questionnaire and data taken

from the Students Information System (SIS) at the College of Micronesia-FSM, Pohnpei Campus of full-time freshman students. The data and records of participants in this study were treated with strict confidentiality.

# REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter presents the studies that were previously conducted along with the various factors of the investigation. This review of related literature provided a rational basis for the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. Three (3) areas were of prime focus, namely: student socio-demographic characteristics, parents' and guardian's socio-demographic characteristics, and school factors.

## Students' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

### Age

Shanahan (2004) found that age has an impact on the academic performance of students. She concluded that mature students perform better than the younger ones. Sidiropoulos, Makridou –Bousiou, and Stavros (2006) concurred with Shanahan after they conducted a study on the academic performance of students in college Economics. They concluded that: " In regards to the factor "age" we can see that students that are between 21 and 24 seem to receive a better average score than all the others and it is remarkable to note that there is a statistically significant difference compared to those under 21".

Cheesman, Simpson, and Wint (2006) contradicted this report saying that age is not statistically significant in their study of determinant factors of student performance in the University of West Indies. They stated that despite the larger number of older students, when it comes to degree program completion most younger students graduate than older students.

Ergul (2004) studied the relationship between student characteristics and academic achievement in distance education and found that age did not correlate with student academic achievement.

**Gender**

Merculio (1987) and Luangprab (1991) as cited by Inocencio (1997) posited that gender is not significantly related to student performance. Contrastingly, in a study conducted on Economics students, Siegfried (1979) supported that gender is important in economic education and that boys have better results than girls in economic courses. Walstad and Soper (1989) also found that girls were interested in economics more than boys but that was not enough to make girls outperform boys in economics courses. The latter finding became even stronger by further research which found that even if a course is very interesting for a student, there is no guarantee that this student will do better than another with interest in the same course (Siegfried & Walstad, 1990).

**Birth Order**

Tenibiaje's (2009) study showed no relationship between birth order and academic performance.

According to Adler, as cited in Uba (1989), first birth or the oldest child is usually advantaged by a good deal of attention and warmth during the early stage on age of life, which he entertains all alone. Observations and studies have shown that more attention and time are usually accorded the first borns (Becker, 1981). Parental attention by parents declines as the number of sibling's increases and later born children perform less well than their earlier born siblings. The parental attention on children born earlier affects the

later born children to perform less well than their earlier born siblings. Studies carried out in the past on the relationship academic achievement and birth order have shown that there were positive relationships. For example, Leoma (1982) discovered that on relationship of birth order and creativity, first borns and configurations of oldest and only children are significantly more creative on verbal test of creativity than later borns.

Nwafor and Ango (1988) observed that there was more significantly outstanding academic performance amongst first birth children. Tenibiaje (2002) observed that there was a significant difference in intelligence capacity between the first borns and later borns. Spears (1982) in his study, investigated that birth order effect on intelligence with later born children, revealed that later children were less capable than earlier siblings, when birth order effects were controlled.

**Number of Children in the Family**

Previous studies like that of Spauta and Paulson (1995), Kessler (1991) and Olneck and Bills (1979) showed that children from larger families have lower levels of education. Effects of family size or number of siblings have been confounded in the past. According to Lacovou (2001), children from larger families are found to do worse than children from smaller families.

In contrast, Tenebiaje (2009),found out that there is no significant relationship between number of siblings or family size and students' academic performance despite the status of his respondents coming from monogamous and polygamous families.

**English Language Placement**

Stern and Pavelchek (2006) conducted a study to determine college readiness of entering freshmen students by looking at the English language test placement level and whether students took up English courses prior to enrolment. The study found out that high levels of English language test placement were good predictors of college success. Students who took English courses prior to enrolment had better college GPA than those who did not.

Lee and Green (2007) investigated the relationships between graduate students' placement test scores for English as a second language (ESL) and three measures of academic performance (grade point average [GPA], faculty evaluations, and student self-assessments). Although non-significant correlations were found between test scores and GPA, qualitative findings indicated that English skills are an important factor affecting students' course performance. Additional mixed methods analyses found that variations in students' views of academic success and their relevant background knowledge can help explain the overall insignificant relationship between ESL placement test scores and GPA. This mix of methods thus illuminated particular strands of the complex relationships between English proficiencies and graduate-level academic performance.

In a research report performed by Geltner, Schwartz, and Kozeracki (2003) that evaluated factors affecting “first-time-in-college” student performance, they found out that majority of course failures, withdrawals, and drop outs were attributed to low English test placement and non-enrolment of prior English or ESL courses.

**Math Placement**

Parker (2005) looked at undergraduate students' math test placement, math courses taken and grades received and persistence toward a degree. It was determined that a students' timely progress toward a four-year degree is influenced by the students' initial score on the mathematics placement exam and by subsequent performance in mathematics courses. Analysis of longitudinal data suggests that students tend to maintain the level of mathematics skills with which they entered college, and students who graduate in four years seem to increase their knowledge of elementary mathematics during this time.

Smith and Schumacher (2005) found that math SAT scores, verbal SAT scores, percentile rank in high school graduating class, and percentage score on a college mathematics placement exam had some relevance to forecasting the students' grade point averages in their major.

**College Entrance Test**

Zeise (2005) posited that the Scholastic Aptitude Test I & II and the American College Test (ACT) all are college entrance test but all three exams have a weak ability to correlate or predict academic performance in college. Akin Adebayo (1990), contradicted and stated that college entrance test correlated with academic performance and entrance test scores can be used to predict cumulative grade point average of the student.

COM-FSM uses the College of Micronesia Entrance Test (COMET) to determine placement levels of students in English and Mathematics as well as to the degree and certificate programs. The COMET consists of English tests in essay writing, vocabulary,

and reading comprehension. This entrance and placement test also covers four Math tests of varying levels that determines student placement into Math courses. Students passing the COMET (passing score of 700 or above) can enroll in the degree programs whilst students who fail (below 700 score) are invited to the certificate programs and developmental courses before re-taking the COMET.

The COMET was patterned after the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) which was a standardized test for college admissions in the United States. The SAT is owned, published, and developed by the College Board, a non-profit organization in the United States.

Through the COMET placement test, the college enrolls students as: (1) college ready – those who are able to handle college-level courses; (2) developmental – those who need specialized training to improve in some core subject areas; and (3) beginner – those who cannot perform at college-level and are often placed in the general studies program.

Twice every year the college entrance test (COMET) is administered to all senior high school and returning students all over the states of Micronesia. Eligible students can attempt to take the exam until they pass. Lately, the college administered COM-FSM Entrance Test (COMET) to 1721 students from FSM high school seniors from private and public high schools, certificate students at COM-FSM campuses, and interested FSM citizens during Spring Semester 2009. Four hundred ten (410) of these students, 24%, were invited to enroll in the degree programs and one thousand and sixty four students (1,064), 62%, were invited to enroll in certificate programs and remedial

courses/program. About two hundred forty seven (247) students, 14%, of the 1721 students tested were not invited to enroll at the college during school year 2009-2010 (COM-FSM President's Update #328, 2009).

At present the college is encouraging students to take the COMET to reinstate their financial aid with the college. Certificate bound students are given two (2) regular semesters and one (1) summer to complete their certificate of achievement. Degree-bound students are given 6 semesters to complete their degree. Passing the COMET is the only option for students to avail for the financial aid (Pell Grant) afforded to them. Failure in the COMET will mean they cannot pursue degree programs and if they fail to maintain their GPA, they'll be placed in academic warning for which they have to earn more credits to maintain their GPA. This is one of the major causes of students' low retention and success rates

## Parent's/Guardian's Socio-Demographic Characteristics

### Educational Attainment of Parents

Education Matters (2004) reported that the average math scores of students whose parents had high school or less were significantly lower than the average scores of students whose parents had college or university.

Bowen (1978), Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulus, and Dornbusch (1990), stated, "an abundance of evidence based on major national studies with huge samples indicates a very strong and positive relationship between the education of parents and the measured intelligence, academic achievement, and extracurricular participation of children in

school or college". He believed that college-educated parents affect their children's attitudes, values, and decisions about school and college.

Marks (2006) compared the influence of father's and mother's education on student performance in literacy and numeracy using data from thirty (30) countries. The impact of mother's education is usually greater or comparable to that of father's education. In most countries the impact of mother's socioeconomic characteristics (education plus occupation) on student performance is comparable to that for father's. Of the four indicators of socioeconomic background, father's occupational status and mother's educational attainment tend to have stronger effects, although many countries do not conform to this pattern. There are indications that the relative importance of mother's characteristics have increased over time.

Khan and Shah (2002), stated that as far as the parental education of the student is concerned, a consistent increase in the mean percentage score of students is observed with the increasing level of parental education up to BA/B.Sc. Looking at the individual parent, for example, in the case of father education, the scores are positively correlated up to first degree level. In the case of mother education, the scores are positively correlated with secondary school education. There is however, a decline in the score of children whose fathers have a master's degree. Student's score decreases as the level of mother education increases beyond secondary school education. It is also observed that the father's education has a strong impact on a boy's achievement whereas the level of mother education has strong impact on girl's achievement.

Hicks (2006) posited that students who had parents with no college experience, parents with some college experience and students with at least one parent with a bachelor's degree seem to hold the same high expectations for the highest degree they intended to achieve. Based on their academic experiences and lack of exposure to the college environment, these students may have unrealistic expectations about success.

**Annual Family Income**

Most of the empirical evidence on student achievement had been quantitative studies which examined how socioeconomic status affect student achievement. Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulus, and Dornbusch (1990) posited that parents of high socioeconomic status background are more likely than parents of low socioeconomic backgrounds to be involved in their children's education. (Howley 1989; Howley *et al.*2000; House 2002) concurred saying that students learn better if they are from above-average or average income family, with well-educated parents who participate in the schools' education process and encourage children to learn.

**Parents' or Guardians' Occupation**

Marks (2006), in his study comprising 30 countries comparing fathers' and mothers' occupation in influencing students' performance, found that father's occupational status tend to have stronger effects on student performance. He contends that fathers' occupation in combination with the mothers' educational attainment have its greatest effects on students' performance.

Education Matters (2004) reported that parental occupation may influence student performance in various ways. For example, occupation-related income may determine

access to learning opportunities and resources and so play a role in learning outcomes. The education and types of skills associated with different occupations and modeled by parents may motivate students to develop their own skills in particular ways.

Fuchs and Woessmann (2004), in their research study comparing students' performance coming from parents with blue and white-collared jobs, revealed that the students from white-collared job parents performed better than students from the blue-collared job parents. They added that students whose parents have either their mother or father working alone performed better than those students whose parents are not working at all.

**Parental /Guardians' Support in Education**

Hicks (2006) assessed the effects of parental involvement on first and second-generation students and concluded that because the first-generation college students' parents had the opportunity to attend a college or university, there seems to be more parental involvement and support for their child/children to attend a college and do well. College students (first-generation or second-generation) who perceive positive family support in their college experiences are likely to possess more information about college and to be more successful in college than those students who do not perceive positive family support.

The study above has shown that parents who are involved in their child's education can be a strong and positive influence on the student's academic achievement and postsecondary plans. However, unless parents have the information and knowledge they need, it is difficult for them to help their children explore, plan, and make the

successful transition from high school to college. This study has shown that parents, particularly those who did not attend college, often do not have the necessary tools, information, and resources to assist their children with college planning.

Moore (2006) reported that parental involvement and family support were found to positively correlate to the level of adjustment and performance to college. Analyses of these data reveal a statistically significant difference in student adjustment and performance to college when comparing the participants by age, university classification, and living arrangement. Further analysis revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between gender, race, students' marital status, and parents' marital status when measuring the outcome of perceived family support. Perceived level of parental attachment differs significantly when comparing students by their race, marital status, and their parents' marital status.

## School Characteristics

### Educational Resources and Facilities

### Financial aid

With today's rising cost of education, it is vital that students and their parents learn how to effectively finance higher education. Since the 1980's, tuition has increased annually at two to three times the rate of inflation. Between 1981 and 1995, tuition at four-year public colleges has increased 234 percent (Gordon, Habley, & associates, 2000), forcing many families to start learning more about how to strategically finance their children's expenses. But this can be a confusing and daunting challenge and, although the financial aid office can help students develop creative ways to finance these

costs, sometimes situations may arise when a financial aid counselor is not available. Often, students begin their search for help with their academic advisers.

If financial concerns are affecting a student's performance in the classroom, the adviser may want to try to ascertain whether it is a money management issue or if there are extenuating circumstances. There is more to the cost of college than tuition, fees, room, and board. Many students do not realize how much extras such as clothing, school supplies, food, and a social life can cost. Some students who do receive a lot of financial aid may be managing their money poorly and finding themselves out of cash before the end of semester. An academic adviser with knowledge of financial aid can encourage the student to work out a plan with the financial aid office to get through the rest of the semester.

Bettinger (2004) examined the effect of Pell grants (financial aid) on student persistence. The study used unique, student-level data from all public colleges in Ohio. The data included detailed financial data which allow identification of small discontinuities in the Pell grant formula. The results based on discontinuity approaches suggest that Pell grants reduce college drop-out behavior. The results in this paper support other evidence that found a relationship between need-based aid and college completion.

*Financial Assistance in the College of Micronesia-FSM*

Under the revised Compact of Free Association with the U.S.A, the FSM retained direct eligibility for the PELL grant program, a U.S. federal education program that provides financial assistance to Micronesian students to complete their college career.

Each beginning semester usually on the fall semester, majority of students apply for federal Pell Grant.

A system-wide average of eighty (80%) percent of students received Pell grant for the Year 2007. Pohnpei Campus has an average of 82.86% of students who availed for this grant in 2007. According to COM-FSM, Pohnpei Campus Financial Aid Office, the grant usually pays all of student's tuition and various types of fees like admission, registration, miscellaneous, lab, library, computer lab, textbook, tools, and even other school needs such as pen, notebook, safety shoes, clothing, transportation, etc… Students or parents then refund excess of funds from the Pell grant that is availed usually at the middle of the semester.

According to the Financial Aid system, a student should enroll a minimum of twelve (12) credits per regular semester; should complete at least a minimum of 24 credits after two (2) regular semesters, and maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or better for every semester to be eligible for the next school year. Failure to maintain their GPA for the first semester will mean Academic Probation. The student has to make up for the second semester and should come up with a GPA of 2.0 otherwise he/she will be placed on Academic suspension and will have to pay for his/her own fees.

**Academic Advising**

Mentoring is an integral part of education at almost all educational institutions and its purpose is to guide students toward success by the timely completion of their studies as well as the identification and fulfillment of their academic goals. Academic advising is especially important when a student enters the program, when a student

experiences academic difficulty, including probation and possibility of expulsion, and when a student is close to graduation.

Russell, Russell, and Lehman (2008) examined the responses of 394 students to a survey about academic advising. The results showed strong relationships between grade-point average and student satisfaction with the advising process. This finding suggests that nurturing more permanent advising relationships could lead to greater student satisfaction.

**Tutorial Services**

Abrams and Jernigan (1984) identified 219 high-risk students at Eastern Michigan University and placed them on small classes with visiting tutors. The students also participated in reading and study skills program. As a result of this involvement, they significantly improved their reading skills. Also, 57 percent of these high-risk students earned a C or better average by the end of their freshman year, even though predictions based on their admission test scores and high school grade-point averages (GPAs) suggested failure. The variables of hours spent using the support services and the number of tutor contacts correlated positively with their college GPAs and improved the prediction of their fall GPAs.

Gallagher (1998) studied the effectiveness of an academic appeal program in improving the retention of at-risk students at John Logan Community College in Illinois. This program allows students whose poor academic performance results in ineligibility for financial aid to continue their schooling under strict performance contract. A survey was made to 314 students, for which 46 students responded. Variables demonstrating the

program effectiveness were identified as improved GPA, continued enrollment at JALC, and reinstatement of eligibility for financial aid. Results indicated that over a period of three (3) semesters, the average student GPA started low, increased while in the program (AAP), and declined slightly the semester after the program. Results show that 57% in the first semester, 46% in the second semester, and 80% in the 3rd semester returned the semester after enrollment in the program. The overall percentage of students approved for financial eligibility was 48.6%.

**Student Health Services**

College health programs have evolved considerably since the early 1800's. Issues that affect today's college student include: tobacco use, alcohol and other drugs, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, contraception, infectious illness, eating disorders, and vaccine-preventable diseases (Turner and Hurley, 2002). The health issues which affect students' success are often attributed to behavior (Miller et al., 2003). Emphasis is placed on health education and promotion. (Miller et al., 2003). Additionally, student health services of today collaborate with the greater academic community in which they reside (Patrick, 1992).

Educational institutions are providing facilities that make student health a top priority. By establishing prominently placed student health centers on campus, they're creating a welcoming, inviting setting that's more than functional. And it's not just about improving student health. These facilities also help attract new recruits, reinforce campus values about health, and add academic value by providing research and resource opportunities.

At the College of Micronesia-FSM, Pohnpei Campus, one school nurse is stationed at the college clinic to cater for students, staff, and faculty in case of sudden illnesses and emergencies. From time to time, the nurse sends out health reminders and information apart from participating in health seminars, conferences, and meetings that the public health authority and community may be sharing.

**Counseling**

Lee, Olson, Locke, Michelson, and Odes (2009) examined the relationship between counseling experience and college students' academic performance and retention in a sample of 10,009 college freshmen and transfer students. The results indicated that counseling experience is significantly associated with student retention: students receiving counseling services were more likely to stay enrolled in school. However, counseling experience was not related to academic performance when controlling for pre-college academic performance (i.e., high school GPA, and verbal and math SAT scores). In addition, students seeking both individual and group counseling showed better academic performance than the students who received other service types.

The College of Micronesia-FSM, Pohnpei Campus has student support services (SSS) personnel handling student counseling tasks apart from all full time faculty that share the burden of advising and counseling all students. The SSS keeps track of all students on deficiency status, advise students and direct them to proper channels / advisors.

**Campus Buildings and Recreational Facilities**

Churchill and Iwai (1981) studied five groups of undergraduate students, dropouts (academic dismissals), low stop-outs (voluntary leavers with low GPA), low persisters (continuing students with low GPA), high stop-outs (voluntary leavers with high GPA), high persisters (continuing students with high GPA), were compared in terms of their use of various campus facilities and their responses to a checklist of personal problems. The high stop-outs and high persisters did not differ in use of facilities. However, among the low academic performance students, the low persisters made significantly greater use of facilities than the low stop-outs, who, in turn, made significantly greater use of facilities than dropouts. These findings, for the most part, did not appear to be related to the self-reported importance of personal problems. It was concluded that among low performance students, the broad use of campus services and facilities can be taken as a measure of student integration in the college community.

Huesman, Jr., Brown, and Lee (2001) studied the effects of students using recreational facilities and found that this had contributed significantly to students' first term GPA's. They added that recreational facilities initiate students' social integration.

Belch, et al. (2001) compared counts of college recreational facilities (CRF) usage of three cohorts of first year students (11,076 total) against institutional records to compare GPA and persistence of CRF users versus non-users. They reported higher GPAs among CRF users and higher rates of persistence among CRF users, except for Asian American students. They attributed the results to the social nature of CRF and the sense of community shared by CRF users.

**Library**

Watson (2001) contended that the library makes a difference in the college lives of students. The library is a central resource, physically dominating on the face of the campus, used by all sorts of students at all times of the day and the year. Students see the library as an essential resource. Without the availability of the library's technological resources, students report that their academic experiences would be negatively affected. His findings yielded the following results: (1) Freshmen perceive the library and its effect on their academic outcomes in a more neutral way; (2) Students who feel comfortable with the library agree more than those who do not that the library helps them in their academic work; (3) If students dread using the library for schoolwork, that feeling has a negative effect on academic outcomes; (4) Students feel strongly that the library is a place to use technology, in the form of copiers and computers for information retrieval; (5) While students feel that the library is a place to use technology, they do not necessarily correlate this function with their academic success or failure; and (6) Students perceive the library as a place to study, and in this capacity they correlate the library with their academic success.

Whitmire (2002) investigated the relationship between an institution's academic library performance measures and undergraduates' library use and educational outcomes. The sample consisted of 7,958 undergraduates attending 36 colleges and universities representing four institutional types. Regression analyses determined the relationship between academic library performance measures and library use and self-reported gains in critical thinking while controlling for undergraduates' background characteristics and

college experiences. Greater utilization of academic library services had a negative relationship with undergraduate library use at two institutional types. However, undergraduates attending research universities with greater academic library resources had higher self-reported gains in critical thinking. Regressions for the four institutional types explained 25% to 32% of the variance for library use and 22% to 27% of the variance for self-reported gains in critical thinking. The results provide a better understanding of how academic library resources and services affect both library usage and educational outcomes.

**Computer Laboratory**

Advancing technology has opened many doors in education. It was a long time since televisions and VCR's were first used in teaching. After something has been taught conventionally, teaching the topic visually adds a new level of understanding for the student. In today's digital world, computers are now being extensively used by both learners and teachers. Computer laboratories (labs) now exist in schools and colleges. Teaching, communicating, and learning became faster as many would say and even distance education is becoming globally popular.

Fuchs and Woessmann (2004) estimated the relationship between computers and students' educational achievement in the international student-level PISA database. Bivariate analyses show a positive correlation between achievement and computer availability both at home and at school.

Attewell and Battie (1999) used the 1988 National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS) to show that having a home computer is associated with higher test

scores in both mathematics and reading. After controlling for differences in demographic and individual characteristics, they find that students with home computers score 3 to 5 percent higher on these tests than those students without home computers.

Using data from the Computer and Internet Use Supplement to the 2001 Current Population Survey (CPS), Fairlee (2005) showed that having access to a computer is associated with a higher likelihood of being enrolled in school. He found that teenagers with home computers are 10 percentage points more likely to be enrolled in school than their counterparts without home computers.

**Student Evaluation of Faculty Performance**

B.Fenderson, I.Damjanov, M.Robeson, E.Rubin (1995) studied the relationship of students' perceptions of faculty to scholastic achievement. Implied in these evaluations is the notion that popular instructors (i.e., those considered outstanding by the students) are better educators, whose teaching translates into higher scores for their students on examinations. A hypothesis was tested by comparing students' evaluations of the faculty with levels of academic achievement in a second-year pathology course. Objective measures of academic achievement included scores on final comprehensive examinations, final course grade, and performance on the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE). During the 4 years studied (1990 to 1995), students belonging to groups with the highest ratings for their instruction performed no better than those with the poorest ratings. There was no correlation between students' perceptions of quality in teaching and their academic achievement. Results indicated that students' evaluations of the faculty are subjective and do not correlate with objective

results used in the assessment of student knowledge. Popular instructors are not necessarily better educators.

## Summary of Related Literature

The literature and studies cited above are relevant to the present study. These gave insights and ideas in its conceptualization.

On the socio-demographic characteristics of students in terms of age, gender, number of children, and birth order affecting academic performance, earlier researchers have conflicting results. Whilst some researchers find these student personal characteristics correlated, affected, or impacted academic performance, others did not. Whereas, more studies like Shanahan (2004), Sidiropoulos, Makridou –Bousiou, and Stavros (2006) found age impacted academic performance, Cheesman, Simpson, and Wint (2006) and Ergul (2004) had opposite findings.

On the gender characteristics, Merculio (1987) and Luangprab (1991) as cited by Inocencio (1997) stated that gender is not related to academic performance. This was contradicted by Siegfred (1979) and Walstad and Soper (1989) who posited that gender is very important in economics education.

On the birth order characteristic, similar conflicting results were found by Adler (as cited by Uba, 1989) and Tenibiaje (2009). According to Tenibiaje, no influence on academic performance were found. Adler found that birth order had some effects on academic performance which was confirmed by Leoma (1982), Nwafor and Ango (1988), and Spears (1982). For the number of children, researchers like Spauta and Olson (1995), Kessler (1991), and Olneck and Bills (1979) reported that larger families have

lower levels of education. This was not supported by Tenibiaje (2009) who said that number of children had not significant relationship with academic performance.

On the academic characteristics of the student such as their scores in Math, English, and college entrance test, conflicting results were just a few. Studies about English courses affecting college performance from Stern and Pavelchek (2006), Geltner, Schwartz, and Kozeracki (2003) found English plays an important role on course success. However, Lee and Green (2007) found non correlations in their study. For the Math score, this was highly consistent from one researcher to another as it correlated with academic performance. These were studies done by Parker (2006), Smith and Schumacher (2005). For the college entrance test, there were contradicting results. Zeise (2005) stated that college entrance test did not predict college success but was opposed by Adebayo (1990) who said that college entrance test correlated with academic performance.

For the parents' socio-demographic characteristics, parents'/guardians' education as posited by Bowen, Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulus, and Dornbusch (1990) was strongly related to academic achievement. This finding was consistent with other studies like those with Marks (2006), and Khan and Shah (2002). On annual income of parents/guardians, many studies found good influence on students' education. This finding was similar with parents' occupation as claimed by research studies from Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulus, and Dornbusch (1990), and Howley, et al (2000), and House (2002). Parents' support in education found consistent findings from studies done by

Hicks (2006) and Moore (2006) who said that parental support had a good relationship with academic performance.

School characteristics were proven by many studies to affect students' performance. Bettinger (2004), Russel, Russel, and Lehman (2008), Abrams and Jernigan (1984), etc… were some researchers who stated that school factors correlated to academic performance. These studies concluded that these would always be a part of effective teaching and learning process.

The related studies and literature cited hereto provided the researcher bases in the discussion of results whether to agree or disagree with the outcomes of the study. Likewise, these reviewed studies provided his conclusion, suggestions or recommendation that will improve the student academic performance.

# METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the conceptual framework, operational definition of terms, research design, locale of the study, population sampling and procedure, research instrument and pre-testing, data gathering procedure, and method of data analysis.

## Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study was inspired by Gagne's (1985) Conditions of Learning. In this theory, several different types or levels of learning are specified. Different external and internal conditions are needed for each type of learning. Learning hierarchies define what intellectual skills are to be learned and a sequence of instructions, and events of learning operate on the learner in ways that constitute the conditions of learning.

In the College of Micronesia-FSM, one is confronted with students of different educational, cultural, and family backgrounds as well as different personal characteristics. These different characteristics like student socio-demographic characteristics, parents' and guardians' socio-demographic characteristics, and school characteristics could be referred to what Gagne (1985) was stressing as internal and external conditions. What faculty members teach are the learning hierarchies and the events of learning that operate on the learner.

Based on the theory, the main purpose is to describe these variables and find their correlation to students' academic performance in a Micronesian, most particularly, Pohnpeian setting. The researcher selected the independent variables students' socio-

demographic characteristics, parents'/guardians' socio-demographic characteristics, and school characteristics affecting the dependent variable – students' academic performance.

Students' socio- demographic characteristics entering college were in terms of their age, gender, birth order, number of children in the family, and academic background – such as Mathematics placement scores, English placement scores, and College of Micronesia Entrance Test (COMET) scores.

Parents'/guardians' socio-demographic characteristics are in terms of highest educational attainment of parents or guardian, occupation of parents or guardian, annual family income, and students' perception on how well their parents/guardian are involved, provide support and encouragement in their studies, and if their parents or guardian attend to college functions, activities, or classes. This also includes how students perceived their parents' understanding on the steps needed to apply for college and financial aid.

School characteristics refer to the perception of students on how they viewed educational resources and facilities according to (1) how frequently they use it, (2) how satisfied they are; and (3) how important those resources and facilities are in their studies. These resources and facilities are financial aid services, academic advising, tutorial services, counseling services, use of college building facilities, recreational facilities, library, and computer laboratory. This also includes their perception concerning faculty and course/program they are enrolled such as faculty care, classes attended are well organized, faculty help to student, subject taught, mastery of courses, accurate record of student files, and proper feedback on student work.

Moreover, this concept is based on how students perceive their school environment including the faculty. This factor was selected because it is assumed that learning is facilitated by the presence of good educational resources and facilities coupled with the services (environment) being rendered to students by college staff and faculty. It is assumed that students' perception on school factors would have an impact to their learning outcome. The conceptual framework of this study is illustrated in Figure. 1.

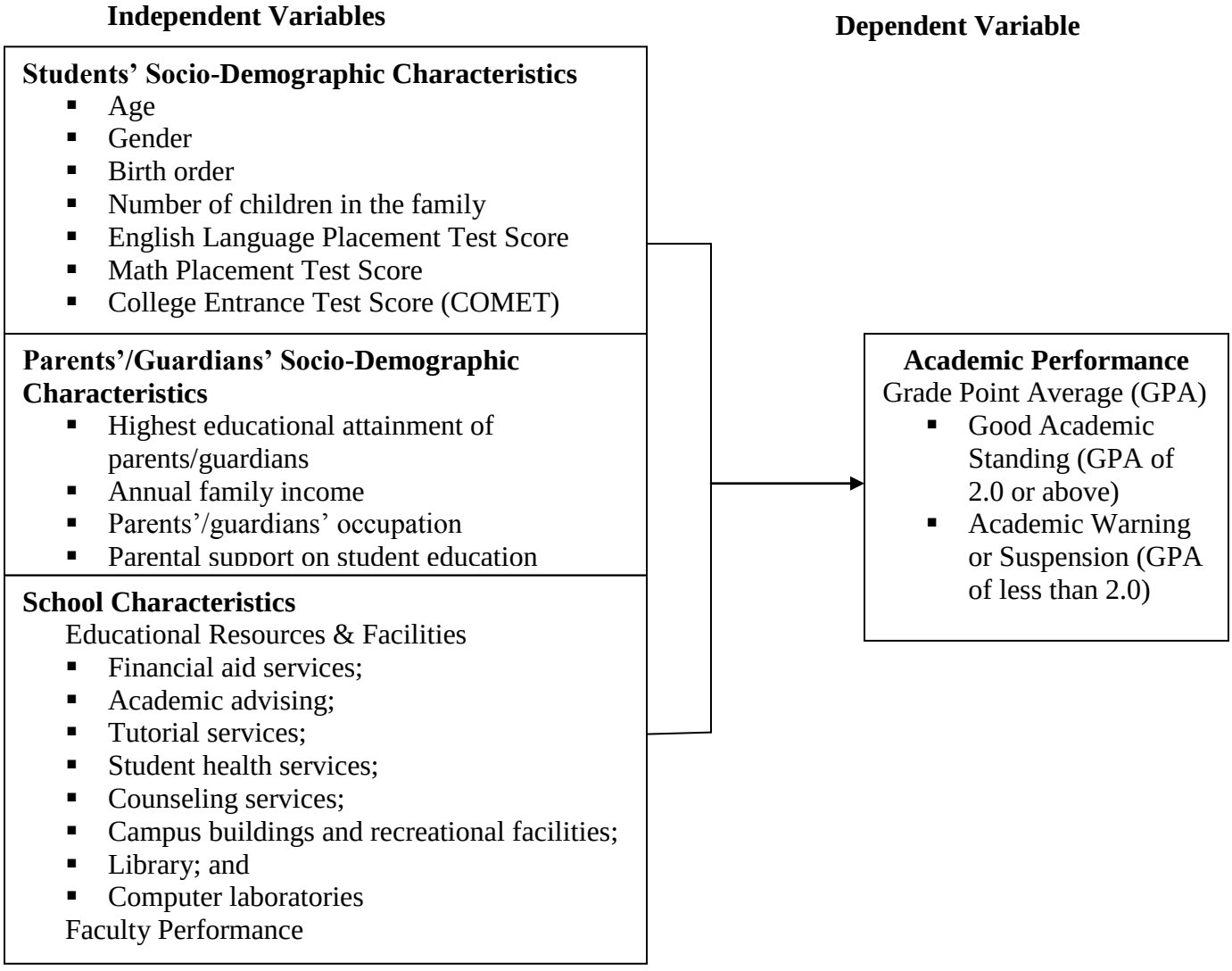


Figure 1. The Model of conceptual framework

**Operational Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined according to how these were used in the study for clarity and better understanding.

**Students' Socio-Demographic Characteristics** were in terms of students' age, gender, birth order, number of children in the family, math placement score, English language placement score, and College of Micronesia Entrance Test or COMET score.

**Age** refers to the age of respondents for this study. It was dichotomized to classify "older or mature" students and "younger" students based on the mean. Those falling below the mean were classified as "younger" students. Those within or above the mean were classified as "older or mature" students.

**Gender** pertains to either male or female gender of respondents.

**Birth Order** refers to sibling position and classified into two classes: first born or later born ($2^{nd}$, $3^{rd}$, $4^{th}$, etc…).

**Number of Children** pertains to the number of children in the household. These were classified into three (3) groups: "1-4 children", "5-8 children", and "9 or more children".

**English Placement Score or Level** refers to the English placement level of freshman students. Based on the mean, English placement scores were dichotomized to be either "lower level" or "higher level". Scores falling from the mean are considered as 'lower level" and scores within the mean or higher were considered "higher level". For the purpose of this study, the word "placement", "level", or "score" will mean the same

thing as long as it is preceded by the word English. These words will be used interchangeably.

**Math Placement Level or Score** pertains to the Math placement level of freshmen students. Based on the mean, Math placement scores were classified to be either "lower level" or "higher level". Scores falling from the mean were considered 'lower level" and scores within the mean or higher were considered "higher level". For the purpose of this study, the word "placement", "level", or "score" will mean the same thing as long as it is preceded by the word Math. These words will be used interchangeably.

**College of Micronesia Entrance Test (COMET) score** is the test score of entering freshman students. This score determined student's placement to either degree or certificate program. A COMET test score of 700 and above qualifies the student for the degree program whilst below 700 will allow admission into the certificate programs. This was dichotomized as "certificate program level" and "degree program level". Those students having a COMET score below 700 were classified as "certificate program level" and those having scores of 700 or above were classified as "degree program level".

**Parents'/Guardians' Socio-Demographic Characteristics** were in terms of educational attainment of parents or guardian, annual family income, parents'/ guardians' occupation, and parental/guardians' support in education.

**Highest Educational Attainment of Parents or Guardians** is the highest level of education attained by the respondents' parents or guardians. Only the higher educational attainment from either parent or guardian was considered in the statistical

analysis. These were categorized as primary, elementary, high school, attended college, college degree, and master or doctorate degree. For the purpose of this study, parents or guardians are used interchangeably.

**Annual Family Income** – pertains to the yearly income of the family. It will be in the increments of five thousand US dollars starting at: less than 10,000, 11-15,000$, 16-20,000$, 21-25,000$, 26-30,000$, and 31,000$ or more.

**Parents' or Guardians' Occupation** concerns the occupation or source of living of either parent or guardian. Only the higher occupation from either parent or guardian was considered. For example, if the father's job was categorized as white collared job and the mother's job as blue-collared job, the higher type of job (in this case, the white collared job) was considered. These were classified as white-collared job, blue-collared job, and / or unemployed.

**Parental or Guardian's Support on Student Education i**ncluded five items in measuring parents'/guardians' support and involvement in their studies. These five statements were: (1) My parents/guardian encourage me to pursue higher education; (2) My parents/guardian motivate me in my studies and help me in my assignments; (3) My parents/guardian provide strict discipline in my daily college activities for the benefit of my academic performance; (4) My parents / guardian attend college functions, volunteer and/or attend college activities or classes; and (5) My parents/guardian understand the steps understand the steps needed to apply for college and for financial aid. This was measured on a five-point Likert scale as follows: 1=Strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3=

Neutral; 4= Agree; and 5=Strongly agree. The weight mean level of parental support factors were measured and interpreted based on the following scale and description:

| Mean | Descriptive Rating |
|---|---|
| 4.20 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree |
| 3.40 – 4.19 | Agree |
| 2.60 – 3.39 | Neutral |
| 1.80 – 2.59 | Disagree |
| 1.00 - 1.79 | Strongly Disagree |

**School Characteristics** are the college campus' services, facilities, buildings, and other educational and recreational facilities that are available in the campus. Enumerated below are the groups of school factors and the items under each.

**Educational Resources and Facilities** refers to how the students perceived the college resources and facilities according to: (1) how frequently they used it, (2) how satisfied are they; and (3) how important are those resources and facilities in their studies. These resources and facilities were in terms of financial services, academic advising, tutorial services, counseling services, use of college building facilities (such as classrooms, toilets, nahs, bookstore, workshops, science labs, and canteen), recreational facilities (such as sports and student clubs), library, and computer laboratory. These are measured on a three-point scale for the three sections: A) Frequency of Use (1-Never; 2-Sometimes; and 3-Always); B) Satisfaction (1-Not at all; 2-Somewhat; and 3-Very); and C) Importance (1-Not at all; 2-Somewhat; and 3-Very). The weight mean level of

educational resources and facilities were measured and interpreted based on the following scales and description:

| **Frequency of Use** | | **Satisfaction** | | **Importance** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mean | Descriptive Rating | Mean | Descriptive Rating | Mean | Descriptive Rating |
| 2.34 - 3.00 | Always | 2.34 - 3.00 | Very Satisfied | 2.34 - 3.00 | Very Important |
| 1.67 - 2.33 | Sometimes | 1.67 - 2.33 | Somewhat Satisfied | 1.67 - 2.33 | Somewhat Important |
| 1.00 - 1.66 | Never | 1.00 - 1.66 | Not Satisfied | 1.00 - 1.66 | Not Important |

**Faculty Performance** this was how students perceived the seven (7) statements as follows: (1) faculty care about me as an individual and are concerned about my academic needs; (2) the classes I attend are well organized and well taught; (3) Faculty help students understand program / course requirements; (4) Courses / subjects are taught in a clear easy to follow step-by-step manner; (5)Faculty demonstrate mastery of courses / subjects they teach; (6) Faculty maintain accurate files on students' progress; and (7) Faculty give proper feedback on my work and show fairness in grading my academic performance. These were measured using a five-point scale (1=Strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Neutral; 4= Agree; and 5=Strongly agree). The weight mean level of faculty rating were measured and interpreted based on the following scales and description:

| Mean | Descriptive Rating |
|---|---|
| 4.20 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree |
| 3.40 – 4.19 | Agree |
| 2.60 – 3.39 | Neutral |
| 1.80 – 2.59 | Disagree |
| 1.00 - 1.79 | Strongly Disagree |

**Academic Performance** is the level of success determined by the cumulative grade point average (GPA) at the end of the semester.

**Academic Standing** is the academic status of the student after the first (Fall) semester 2009. This will be dichotomized as "academic warning or suspension" (cumulative GPA falls below 2.0) and "good academic standing" (cumulative GPA is 2.0 or above).

**Freshman Student** is anyone who had been a high school or GED graduate presently attending the community college for the first time and had been admitted in accordance to college admission policies and procedures or any continuing and returning student who did not yet complete a certificate program or 35-36 credits in his/her declared major of study.

**Full-Time Student** is one who registered for 12 credits or more during the regular semester. This was placed in the SSQ (Appendix D-Item #6 – major of study) which means that students declaring their major of study are having not less than 12 credits. This was a pre-requisite for students participating in the study.

**Grade Point Average (GPA)** is the total number of quality points resulting from letter grades of A through F obtained in college courses divided by the total number of course credits completed. Letter grade corresponding to their numerical values are given below:

A=4 grade points

B=3 grade points

C=2 grade points

D=1 grade point

WF/F=0 grade point

P/NP (Pass/No Pass) courses are not factored in the student's GPA. I (Incompletes) and W (Withdrawals) do not receive grade points and do not have an effect on the GPA.

**Student Survey Questionnaire (SSQ)** comprised 29 items to obtain information from respondents of the study. This generally asked respondents to answer questions or state their opinions to statements.

**Research Design**

The study adopted the descriptive research design using survey method. Richardson (1992), as cited by Picart (2003), defined it as a type of research that includes studies that refer to present facts concerning the nature and status of anything. This means that the descriptive method gives further meaning to the present day-to-day realities that happens. The aims in employing this method are to describe the nature of a

situation as it exists at the time of the study and to explore the causes of particular phenomena.

**Locale of the Study**

The study was conducted at the College of Micronesia-FSM, Pohnpei Campus (see Figure. II and Figure III). This campus enrolled a total of 712 students during the Fall Semester of 2009. There were 270 full time freshman students during that semester (Source: Office of Admission and Records (OAR), COM-FSM, Pohnpei Campus, Fall 2009).

The latest census (2000 Census) portrayed educational attainment of Micronesians for the population aged 25 and over. With a total population of 108,000, 18.4% completed college degree; 32.3% high school diploma; 36% completed elementary education; 1% pre-school/kindergarten; and 12.3% did not attend school (Educational Statistics, FSM, 2000).

The College of Micronesia-FSM is a two-year, English language speaking institution of higher education located in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). COM-FSM is composed of a National Campus located in Palikir, Pohnpei, state campuses in each of the FSM states (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Yap) and FSM Fisheries Maritime Institute located in Yap State. The central administrative office for the college is located at the National Campus in Palikir, Pohnpei. The college offers 37 degree and certificate programs.

The history of the college began in 1963, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands and University of Hawaii created Micronesian Teacher Education Center (MTEC) to

provide in-service teacher training. In 1970, it became Community College of Micronesia serving the educational needs of FSM, Republic of the Marshall Islands, and Republic of Palau. In 1993, it became College of Micronesia-FSM, independent from the three-country COM system.

While English is the language of instruction, English is considered a second or foreign language for virtually all students at the college. Micronesian students at the college come from different cultural backgrounds and speak sixteen (16) different FSM languages and dialects. Each island group and often individual islands within an island group has its own distinct language and culture.

The college is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Commission on Recognition of Post Secondary Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education. Accreditation was awarded in 1978 and reaffirmed in 1982, 1987, 1992, 1998, and 2005.

COM-FSM, Pohnpei Campus is one of the six campuses of the system-wide College of Micronesia-FSM and is located in downtown Kolonia, Pohnpei, FSM. Pohnpei Campus enrolls over 500 students each semester in various degree and certificate programs. Pohnpei Campus is made up of the following educational divisions: Math/Science, English/Languages, Hospitality and Tourism, Technology and Trade, Business/IT, TRIO Programs (Educational Talent Search (ETS) and Upward Bound (UB) programs), Business Development Center, and Cooperative Extension Services (CES).

Developmental Math and English courses continue to be key components of many of the programs at Pohnpei Campus.

## Locale of the Study

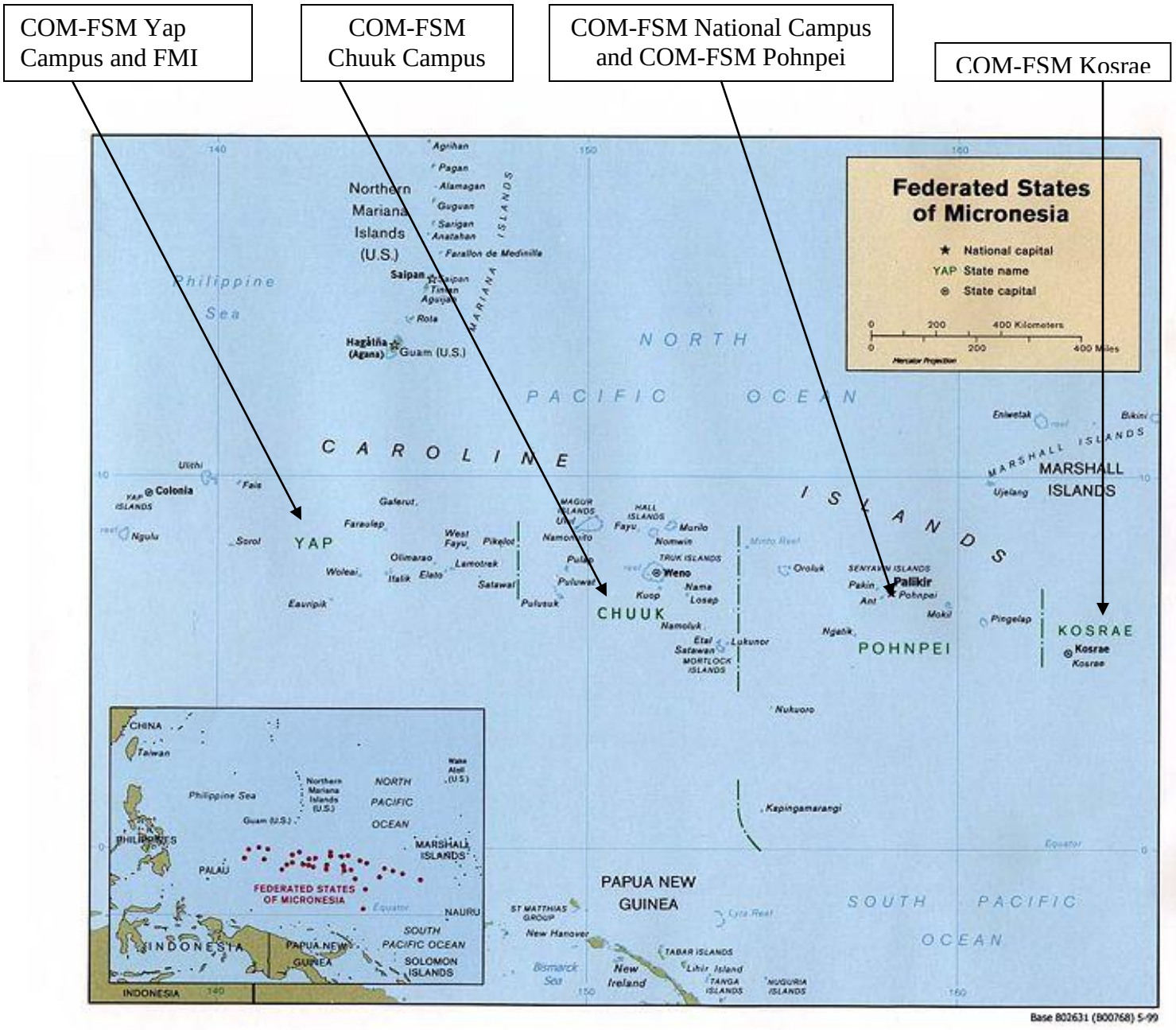


Figure 2. Map showing the location of College of Micronesia-FSM's six (6) campuses

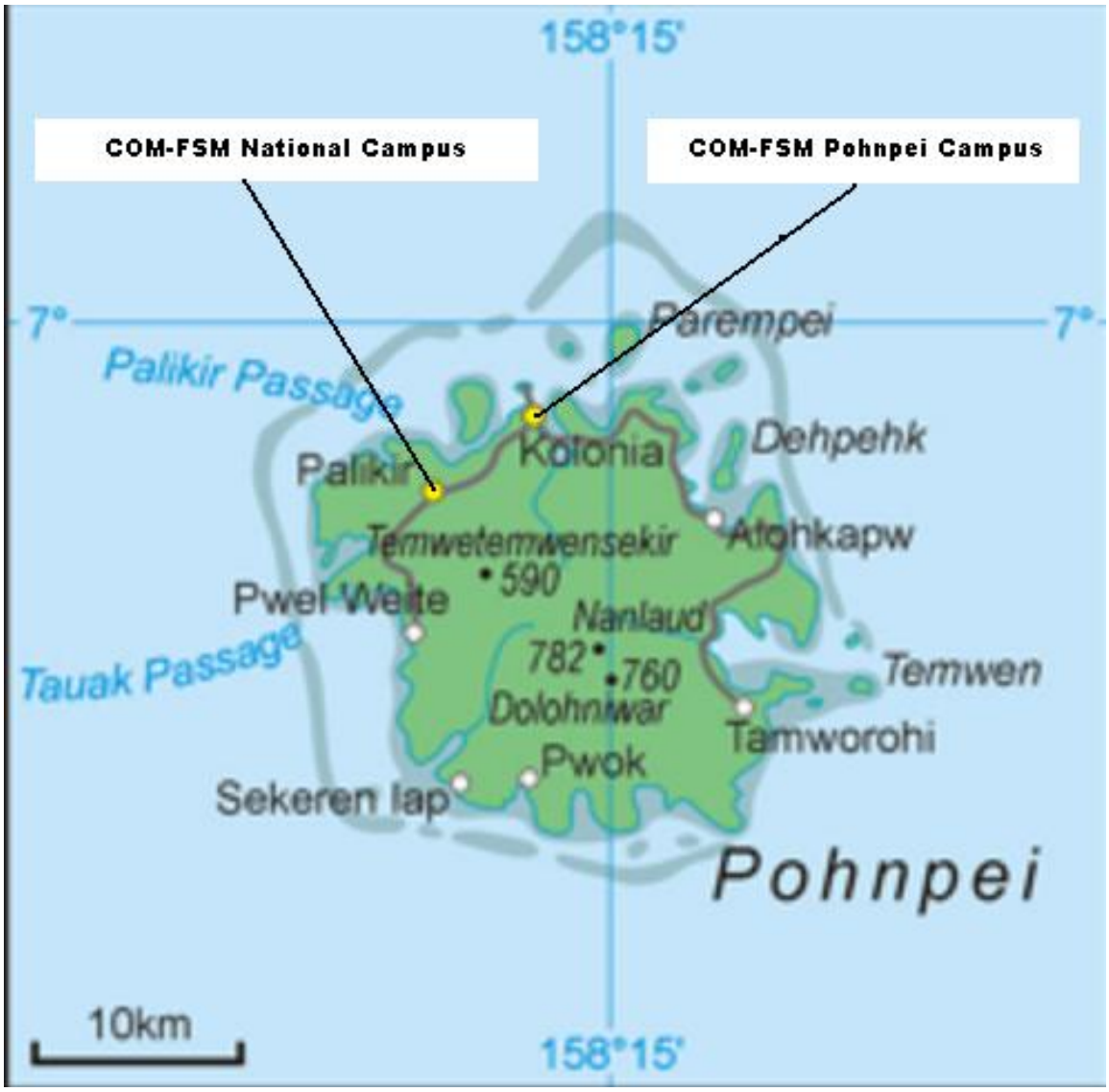


Fig. 3. Map showing the locations of COM-FSM Pohnpei Campus and COM-FSM National Campus in the Island of Pohnpei, FSM

**Population and Sampling Procedure**

The population from which the sample was taken was the freshman students at the College of Micronesia-FSM, Pohnpei Campus. The sample size used Slovin's formula.

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

Where:

n = Number of samples

N = Population size

e = Margin of error at 10%

There were ninety eight (98) respondents to the survey out of a total of two hundred seventy (270) full time freshman students at Pohnpei Campus for the fall semester 2009. The sampling size was within the 10% marginal error. Primary data were gathered from the SSQ and the secondary data taken from COM-FSM IRPO and COM-FSM Pohnpei Campus Office of Admission and Records (OAR) after the fall semester final examination on December 8, 2009.

**Development of the Research Instrument**

The main research instrument used in this study was the Student Survey Questionnaire (SSQ-Appendix D) which served as the primary data gathering instrument. This was accompanied by Request Letter to Participants (Appendix C). The secondary data were provided with permission from COM-FSM Institute of Research and Planning Office and COM-FSM Pohnpei Campus Office of Admission and Records (OAR).

The Student Survey Questionnaire (Appendix D) was created by the researcher based on the objectives of the study. It was later modified as a result of what transpired during the meeting with the researcher and the COM-FSM Vice President for

Instructional Affairs (See Appendix E) and the COM-FSM Director of Institute of Research and Planning Office. The latter part of the SSQ (Items 23-29) which included seven (7) evaluation statements for faculty performance were taken from the COM-FSM Faculty Evaluation Form with the permission of COM-FSM VPIA. The COM-FSM Faculty Evaluation Form was used consistently by the college for several years up to the present time. It was later modified by the researcher and the COM-FSM VPIA to fit the needs of the objectives of the study.

**Pre-Testing of the Research Instrument**

The SSQ was pre-tested to determine the appropriateness, applicability, and clarity of questions. The following were the steps taken in pre-testing the instrument:

(1) The Student Survey Questionnaire was pre-tested to thirty (30) freshman transfer students at COM-FSM National Campus. This campus was not included in sampling for this study.

(2) The pre-test data were analyzed for reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) by using SPSS 17 program. Details of items inputted on SPSS 17 are shown at Table 1 below:

Table 1: Table of Specification for the Perception Instrument

| Component | Item's Placement on SSQ | No. of Items | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. Students' Perception on Parental Support | 10 -14 | 5 | 25 |
| B. Students' Perception on Campus Facilities and Services | 15 - 23 | 9 | 45 |
| C. Students' Perception on Faculty Performance | 24 - 29 | 6 | 30 |
| Total | | 20 | 100 |

The table of specification above achieved the content validity requirement with reliability factor (Cronbach's Alpha) of .916, therefore the SSQ is considered reliable.

The questionnaire used in gathering the data had the following contents:

**Part I: Student Socio-Demographic Characteristics.** This part (Items 1-5) was used to draw basic information of respondents such as age, gender, number of children in the family, birth order, and major of study.

**Part II: Parentss'/Guardians' Socio-Demographic Characteristics.** This part (Items 6-13) contained 8 items concerning parents'/guardian's occupation, highest educational attainment of parents, annual family income, and four statements that asked students' perception regarding parental support in their education.

**Part III: School Factors.** Part III (Items 14-29) contained 16 items concerning students' perceptions on school's (college campus) services and facilities and faculty performance.

**Data Gathering Procedure**

Following college protocol in data collection for this study, permission to administer the student survey questionnaire (SSQ – Appendix D) accompanied by the Request Letter to Participants (Appendix C) was secured through official letter (Appendix B) addressed to the COM-FSM Pohnpei Campus Director. When permission was granted another official letter (Appendix A) was sent personally to the COM-FSM Vice President for Instructional Affairs (VPIA). Upon approval of said letter, the pre-test was conducted. Students' suggestions such as making the questionnaire a one page document and requesting a student oral translator (English to Pohnpeian language) during

the final administration of the survey to help students understand the questions and statements better were all considered and implemented.

It had been emphasized in those official letters (Appendix A and B) that participants' responses will remain confidential, anonymous, and separate from any identifying information. For this reason, the following ethical measures were considered:

(1) Permission letters were obtained from proper authorities before the actual data collection.

(2) Respondents participated voluntarily in this study (Appendix C).

(3) To safeguard the identity of respondents, no names were used to report results (Appendix D).

(4) Data were aggregated for statistical analysis and summarized for reporting, protecting participants' confidentiality at all times.

(5) Moderate amount of time were spent by respondents to answer the questionnaire.

(6) Local language (Pohnpeian) translators were utilized during the survey to ensure clarity of statements and questions and helped participants in understanding the purpose of the survey questionnaire.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Based on the objectives of this study, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, percentage, range, and standard deviation were used to describe the freshman students' socio-demographic characteristics and some items from the parents'/guardians' socio-demographic characteristics. Mean scales were employed to

describe perception components for the Likert-scale items from the questionnaire. Pearson's correlation analysis was employed to determine relationships between the student socio-demographic characteristics, parents'/guardians' socio-demographic characteristics, and school factors and students' academic performance.

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter discusses the results of the study as regards to student socio-demographic characteristics, parents' or guardians' socio-demographic characteristics, and students' perception on parental/guardian support, and students' perception on school characteristics in terms of campus facilities and services and faculty performance. Results of the mean scales and each descriptive rating were also covered for the perception component items of the parents'/guardians' socio-demographic characteristics and school characteristics. This also included the results of Pearson correlation analyses for the variables mentioned and answers to the three (3) null hypotheses of this study. Tables for each objective were presented along with the discussion.

## Students' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The first objective of the study was to describe students' socio-demographic characteristics in terms of age, gender, birth order, number of children, English language placement scores, Mathematics placement scores, and COMET scores. Frequency count and percentages were used to treat the data statistically.

### Age

The age of respondents ranged from 17 to 23 years. Based on the mean of 19.2, more than sixty seven (67.3%) percent belonged to the "mature or older" group of students whilst 32.6% were in the "younger" group. The standard deviation is at 1.14 which means that age amongst students are not far off from the mean.

Table 2. Freshman Students' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

| VARIABLES | | FREQUENCY | PERCENT |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | | n = 98 | |
| 17 | | 2 | 2 |
| 18 | | 30 | 30.6 |
| 19 | | 39 | 39.8 |
| 20 | | 10 | 10.2 |
| 21 | | 16 | 16.3 |
| 23 | | 1 | 1 |
| | Younger Students: | 32.6% | |
| | Older Students: | 67.3% | |
| | Mean: | 19.2 | |
| | Standard Deviation: | 1.14 | |
| | Range: | 17-23 | |
| **Gender** | | | |
| Male | | 62 | 63.3 |
| Female | | 36 | 36.7 |
| Total | | 98 | 100 |
| **Birth Order** | | | |
| First Born | | 20 | 20.4 |
| Later Born | | 78 | 79.6 |
| **Number of Children in the Family** | | | |
| 1 – 4 Children | | 27 | 27.6 |
| 5 – 8 Children | | 58 | 59.2 |
| 9 or more children | | 13 | 13.3 |
| | Mean: | 5.8 = 6 | |
| | Standard Deviation: | 2.6 = 3 | |
| | Range: | 1-17 | |
| **English Language Placement Score** | | | |
| 70 | | 54 | 55.1 |
| 71 | | 35 | 35.7 |
| 99 | | 7 | 7.1 |
| 120 | | 2 | 2 |
| | Lower Level: | 90.80% | |
| | Higher Level: | 9.10% | |
| | Mean: | 73.45 | |
| | Std. Dev. | 10.03 | |
| | Range: | 70-120 | |

*Table 2 continued . . .*

| VARIABLES | | FREQUENCY | PERCENT |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Math Placement Score** | | n = 98 | |
| 95 | | 25 | 25.5 |
| 96 | | 31 | 31.6 |
| 99 | | 29 | 29.6 |
| 100 | | 7 | 7.1 |
| 101 | | 6 | 6.1 |
| | Lower Level: | 57.10% | |
| | Higher Level: | 42.80% | |
| | Mean: | 97.22 | |
| | Std. Dev. | 2.03 | |
| | Range: | 95-101 | |
| **COMET Score** | | | |
| Certificate Program Level: | | 89 | 90.80 |
| Degree Program Level: | | 9 | 9.20 |
| | Mean: | 568.01 | |
| | Std. Dev: | 117.33 | |
| | Range: | 227.48 - 939.84 | |

**Gender**

Out of 98 respondents who took the survey, 63.3% were male and 36.7% were female students. This could be attributed to the fact that 60.1% male students comprised the whole Pohnpei Campus student population during the fall semester 2009 (Source: COM-FSM, IRPO).

**Birth Order**

Of the 98 respondents, majority (79.6%) of Pohnpei campus students were later born. Only 20.4% were first born.

**Number of Children**

Based on the mean of 6 (5.8) children per household, more than half (59.2%) belonged to the 5 – 8 children group. Adding the 9 or more children group at 13.3%

yielded a total of 72.5% of students belonging to a large number of children in the family. The standard deviation of 3 (2.56) with a range of 1-17 indicates that the number of children per family are in close proximity from the mean.

**English Language Placement Score**

Based on the mean of 73.45, majority (90.8%) of students were placed in the "lower level" of English language placement score. Only 9.1% were in the "higher level". The range of scores was 70-120. This result confirmed earlier claims from participants during the COM-FSM President's Retreat 2007, 2008, and 2009 (mentioned in the introductory chapter of this study) regarding the academic unpreparedness of students entering the college.

**Math Placement Score**

The Math placement mean score was 97.22 with a standard deviation of 2.03. The range was 95-101. Based on the mean, more than half (57.1%) of students were in the "lower level" score whilst 42.8% were in the "higher level" score. Similar to the English placement score, this result was consistent to earlier claims from participants of the COM-FSM President's Retreat 2007, 2008, and 2009 about the academic unpreparedness of students entering the college.

**COMET Score**

The mean score of respondents was 568.01 with a standard deviation of 117.33 which shows that scores are widely deviated from the mean. The COMET score range was 227.48 – 939.84. The average score of respondents in the survey did not qualify them to take degree-bound programs as the passing mark is 700. Only 9% of freshman students

were in the degree programs and the rest (91%) were all in the certificate programs. Once again, this result confirmed earlier reports and claims from participants of the COM-FSM President's Retreat 2007, 2008, and 2009 of the academic unpreparedness of students getting admission at COM-FSM.

## Parents'/Guardian's Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The second objective of the study was to describe parents' socio-demographic characteristics in terms of educational attainment of parents or guardian, parents' or guardian's occupation, annual family income, and students' perception on parental / guardians' support in students' education. Frequency count and percentages were used to treat the data statistically. This also included mean scales and descriptive rating for the perception instrument.

### Educational Attainment of Parents or Guardian

The average educational attainment of parents / guardian was at high school level. High School level has also the largest percentage which was at 33.7% followed by "attended college" which was at 24.5%. Summing up the percentage of parents or guardians who have had college experience yielded 41.8% whilst 58.2% of parents or guardians have had no college exposure.

As theorized by Hicks (2006), college students whose parents / guardians had the opportunity to attend a college or university will have more parental involvement and support to their children to attend college and do well.

Table 3. Parents' / Guardian's Socio-Demographic Characteristics

| VARIABLES | FREQUENCY | PERCENT |
|---|---|---|
| **Parents' / Guardians' Highest Educational Attainment** | n = 98 | |
| Primary | 3 | 3.1 |
| Elementary | 21 | 21.4 |
| High School | 33 | 33.7 |
| Attended College | 24 | 24.5 |
| College Degree | 16 | 16.3 |
| MA/MS/PhD | 1 | 1 |
| **Parents' / Guardians' Occupation** | | |
| White-Collared Job | 26 | 27 |
| Blue-Collared Job | 52 | 53 |
| Unemployed | 20 | 20 |
| **Annual Family Income** | | |
| Less than 10,000 $ | 82 | 83.7 |
| 11,000 $ - 15,000 $ | 11 | 11.2 |
| 16,000 $ - 20,000 $ | 4 | 4.1 |
| 21,000 $– 25,000 $ | 1 | 1 |

**Occupation of Parents / Guardian**

Majority (53%) of parents/guardians was employed in the blue-collared job category, twenty seven percent (27%) worked on white-collared jobs, and twenty percent (20%) of parents / guardians are unemployed.

The higher percentage of blue-collared job parents may influence students' academic performance as theorized by Marks (2006). In his study comparing fathers' and mothers' occupation in influencing students' performance, he found that fathers' occupational status tend to have stronger effects on student performance. He contended that fathers' occupation in combination with the mothers' educational attainment have its greatest effects on students' performance.

Majority of students who took part in the survey were in certificate programs ranging from trades and technology to agriculture and hotel and tourism programs. In one of the researcher's experience interviewing some students during the enrollment process, they indicated that they chose a certain program because they simply want to follow their parents' footsteps in their career ladder.

**Annual Family Income**

Majority (83.7%) of families earn less than 10,000 $ a year; 11.2% percent earn between 11,000$-15,000$ annually; 4.1% earn between 16,000$-20,000$ per year; and 1% earn 21,000$-25,000$ per annum.

Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulus, and Dornbusch (1990) posited that parents of high socioeconomic status background are more likely than parents of low socioeconomic backgrounds to be involved in their children's education. However, despite the less than 10,000$ family income that majority of parents earn, it should be noted (as mentioned in the earlier chapters) that Micronesian students avail for Pell grants and other US-based scholarship grants that help them finance their college education. How this grant is budgeted for education remains to be seen. Furthermore, the statements by some participants during the COM-FSM President's Retreat 2007 – 2009 that tuition refund from Pell grants were used as income by parents was not the objective of this study. This study simply wanted to describe the annual income of parents and to what extent does this correlate with students' performance.

Table 4. Parental / Guardians' Support in Education

| Parental / Guardian Support in Students' Education | Mean | Descriptive Rating |
|---|---|---|
| My parents / guardian encourage me to pursue higher education. | 4.28 | Strongly Agree |
| My parents / guardian help me in my assignments | 3.81 | Agree |
| My parents / guardian provide proper discipline for my college activities. | 3.85 | Agree |
| My Parents / Guardian attend college functions, volunteer and/or attend college activities or classes. | 3.32 | Neutral |
| My Parents / Guardian understand the steps needed to apply for college and for financial aid. | 3.89 | Agree |
| Pooled Mean: | 3.83 | Agree |

| Mean | Descriptive Rating |
|---|---|
| 4.20 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree |
| 3.40 – 4.19 | Agree |
| 2.60 – 3.39 | Neutral |
| 1.80 – 2.59 | Disagree |
| 1.00 - 1.79 | Strongly Disagree |

**Parental / Guardians' Support in Education**

On the whole, the students agree that their parents/guardians support their education with a pooled mean of 3.83. Results show that they "strongly agree" with regards to the encouragement to pursue higher education with a mean of 4.28. They also indicated that their parents/guardians understand the steps needed to apply for financial aid (3.89), and provide proper discipline for their college activities (3.85). This means that their parents/guardians encouraged them to pursue higher education, understand what they need and provide for them discipline when necessary. Khan and Shah (2002) stated that parental education had a consistent influence in the scores of students. This shows that parents/guardians can contribute to student academic performance.

## School Characteristics

The third objective of this study was to describe how students perceived the school's educational resources and facilities, and teaching performance of faculty members. Mean scales and descriptive ratings were used to describe students' perceptions on all items on educational resources and facilities as well as the teaching performance of faculty members.

Items for the educational resources and facilities were divided into three columns where students placed their rating according to frequency of use, satisfaction, and importance. These items were explained according to this order: frequency of use, satisfaction, and importance. The presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data of 98 respondents are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

### Educational Resources and Facilities

### Financial Aid Services

Students perceived the financial aid service with average ratings of 2.53, 2.44, and 2.63 for its frequency of use, satisfaction, and importance with descriptive ratings of always, very satisfied, and very important respectively. This shows that students are happy with their financial aid services rating the service at its best.

### Academic advising

This facility had an average of 2.42, 2.45, and 2.50. Student had high descriptive ratings on this area similar to the financial aid services placing their comments as always, very satisfied, and very important.

Table 5. Students' Perceptions on School's Educational Resources and Facilities

| Educational Resources and Facilities | Frequency of Use | | Satisfaction | | Importance | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Mean** | **Descriptive Rating** | **Mean** | **Descriptive Rating** | **Mean** | **Descriptive Rating** |
| Financial aid and services | 2.53 | Always | 2.44 | Very Satisfied | 2.63 | Very Important |
| Academic advising | 2.42 | Always | 2.45 | Very Satisfied | 2.50 | Very Important |
| Tutorial services | 1.85 | Sometimes | 1.93 | Somewhat Satisfied | 2.01 | Somewhat Important |
| Student health services | 2.10 | Sometimes | 2.18 | Somewhat Satisfied | 2.23 | Somewhat Important |
| Counseling services | 2.20 | Sometimes | 2.20 | Somewhat Satisfied | 2.35 | Very Important |
| Classrooms | 2.79 | Always | 2.59 | Very Satisfied | 2.67 | Very Important |
| Nahs | 2.30 | Sometimes | 2.27 | Somewhat Satisfied | 2.38 | Very Important |
| Student Clubs | 1.94 | Sometimes | 2.06 | Somewhat Satisfied | 2.16 | Somewhat Important |
| Bookstore | 2.38 | Always | 2.42 | Very Satisfied | 2.49 | Very Important |
| Workshops | 2.06 | Sometimes | 2.10 | Somewhat Satisfied | 2.22 | Somewhat Important |
| Science Labs | 1.78 | Sometimes | 1.93 | Somewhat Satisfied | 2.06 | Somewhat Important |
| Sports | 2.19 | Sometimes | 2.26 | Somewhat Satisfied | 2.36 | Very Important |
| Canteen | 1.82 | Sometimes | 1.88 | Somewhat Satisfied | 1.88 | Somewhat Important |
| Library | 2.28 | Sometimes | 2.23 | Somewhat Satisfied | 2.37 | Very Important |
| Computer labs | 2.50 | Always | 2.45 | Very Satisfied | 2.60 | Very Important |
| Overall Average: | 2.21 | Sometimes | 2.22 | Somewhat Satisfied | 2.33 | Somewhat Important |

**Legend:**

| Frequency of Use | | Satisfaction | | Importance | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.34 – 3.00 | Always | 2.34 – 3.00 | Very Satisfied | 2.34 – 3.00 | Very Important |
| 1.67 – 2.33 | Sometimes | 1.67 – 2.33 | Somewhat Satisfied | 1.67 – 2.33 | Somewhat Important |
| 1.00– 1.66 | Never | 1.00– 1.66 | Not Satisfied | 1.00– 1.66 | Not Important |

**Tutorial Services**

The tutorial services had an average rating of 1.85, 1.93, and 2.01 and described as sometimes, somewhat satisfied, and somewhat important.

Some researchers like Abrams and Jernigan (1984) and Gallagher (1998) studied the effects of tutorial services in improving student academic performance and retention and their findings yielded good results. However, in the case of COM-FSM Pohnpei Campus students, the problem in getting the students to see their respective tutors seem to be an elusive task as experienced by the researcher himself and most faculty, staff, tutors, and counselors.

This finding reconfirmed those challenges faced by many educators at Pohnpei Campus at present. In one faculty meeting where the researcher was present, two English professors commented that there is a long list of students that need immediate tutoring in English and Math but the question is, students are not coming. One of them said that when names of students are posted on the notice boards to request them to see their instructors, academic advisers, and counselors, not a single shadow appeared in their office doors or windows.

In several meetings with the Campus Enrichment Committee where the researcher is a member, it was often mentioned by members of the faculty and student counselors that students don't ask questions in class even if they did not understand the lesson. One math professor shared that if he asked the question, "Did you understand the lesson today?" They would simply say yes and when asked to explain or demonstrate what they understood, nobody wants to volunteer. It was during this meeting that another

enrichment committee member, Ms. Merins Hadley Race, a native of Pohnpei who completed her college degree in the US, and is presently the Training Coordinator for Pohnpei Campus' short-term training courses, commented something regarding Pohnpeian culture. The researcher asked her permission that he will quote her explanation on this for which she agreed. Ms. Race said, quote: *"We, as Pohnpeians, don't step out from the mold to be identified; Culture has always to be in group",* - unquote. This confirmed earlier research study done by Nancy Faires Conklin (1984) entitled "Culture and Education in Micronesia". She stated that traditional Ponapeian society, like other pre-literate societies, did not conceive of education separate from daily life. Attitudes that will reveal the incongruence between Ponapean culture and American-style schooling can be discerned from childrearing practices and ideas about children and maturation. Learning in Ponape was very like other forms of public behavior, In Ponape (now spelled Pohnpei) culture modesty is the rule. One does not assert oneself, particularly where there is the possibility of being overridden or of failing. Thus, Ponapeian children quietly observe adult work and undertake attempts privately, only exercising the skills before others when they are fully mastered. Nor is praise or even acknowledgement of the achievement be expected. Decorum requires that persons are publically modest about their accomplishment and will observe others' success, but not comment upon them. This modesty can extend to denying that one even has skills or knowledge, a practice that has made it difficult for Ponapeians (Pohnpeians) to compete in a capitalistic job market.

**Student Health Services**

Despite the presence of student health services in the campus, students rated this area with average scores of 2.10, 2.18, and 2.33 which aligned with sometimes, somewhat satisfied, and somewhat important.

According to Miller et al., 2003, the health issues which affect students' success are often attributed to behavior. With health services as perceived by students, could this be true to this particular student population? Whilst this is arbitrary and owing to traditions and culture, students at Pohnpei Campus still chew betel nut on campus and don't seem to mind the unsanitary effects that this bring to the campus environment.

**Counseling Services**

Students rated this service at 2.20, 2.20, and 2.35 described as sometimes, somewhat satisfied, but very important in their education. This followed the attitude portrayed in their comment towards tutoring services and the only difference is how they rated its importance.

As stated by Lee, Olson, Locke, Michelson, and Odes (2009), students seeking both individual and group counseling showed better academic performance than the students who received other service types. To lure students to come for counseling and tutoring, Pohnpei Campus placed more emphasis on focus group counseling and tutoring instead of the individual counseling that had been done before. Students seem to buy this situation, however, results of this strategy remains to be seen.

## Campus Buildings

### Classrooms

Students rated the classrooms at 2.79 (always), 2.59 (very satisfied), and 2.67 (very important) according to its frequency of use, satisfaction, and importance respectively.

### Nahs

According to Pohnpeian culture, nahs (Pohnpeian word) is a wide building built without walls and rooms purposely constructed to host tribal meetings, celebrations, funerals, and any other type of social gathering during the early days.

At Pohnpei Campus, the nahs is used to host student club meetings, social gatherings for staff, faculty, students, and in receiving tribal chieftains and visitors in the campus.

This was rated at 2.30, 2.27, and 2.38 which showed that students used it sometimes, are somewhat satisfied, and perceived it as very important in their education.

### Science Laboratories

At Pohnpei Campus, science labs and workshops exist in all science classes (Natural Sciences), technology and trades programs, and including hotel and tourism management. These are generally made up of small to moderate room sizes sufficient to hold laboratory tasks for students to practice their skills in their chosen field of study.

Students rated the workshops with average scores of 2.06, 2.10, and 2.22 indicating that they sometimes used this building, somewhat satisfied with it, and perceived it as somewhat important in their studies.

Science labs were rated at 1.78, 1.93, and 2.06 indicating similar perceptions to that of the workshops. Churchill and Iwai (1981) stated that the broad use of campus services and facilities can be taken as a measure of student integration in the college community. It was observed by the researcher in many of his laboratory (workshop) practical sessions that students tend to mold not only their skills but also give them the opportunity to work and learn with their classmates especially when they perform as a team in the workshops.

**Canteen**

The Student Support Services building houses the canteen at Pohnpei campus. Food and drinks were served and sold at a reasonable price for staff and students. However, students rated this with average scores of 1.82, 1.88, and 1.88 giving an indication that they used it sometimes, somewhat satisfied with it, and perceived it as somewhat important in their education.

Contrary to what Churchill and Iwai (1981) stated that the broad use of campus services and facilities can be taken as a measure of student integration in the college community, the canteen can also be one of these facilities for students to integrate with the college community and learn from this experience.

**Sports**

This facility was rated at 2.19, 2.26, and 2.36. This indicated that students used it sometimes, were somewhat satisfied, but considered it very important in their education. This is one of the facilities at Pohnpei Campus where students are very active especially in ball games and other exercise sports.

Huesman, Jr., Brown, and Lee (2001) posited that students' use of recreational facilities contributed significantly to their first term GPA's. They added that recreational facilities initiate students' social integration. As Pohnpei Campus students rated this very important, their participation in many games at the gym can help them expedite their academic adjustment to college and also improve their chances of academic success.

**Student Clubs**

This facility was rated at 1.94, 2.06, and 2.16 which shows that students sometimes used it, are somewhat satisfied, and perceived it as somewhat important in their education. Despite this moderate rating, students at Pohnpei Campus are very active when student clubs were grouped according to their culture, language, and traditions. This was observed by the researcher during fundraising activities in the college.

**Bookstore**

This facility was rated highly by students with scores of 2.38, 2.42, and 2.49 as they used it always, very satisfied with their services and considered it very important in their education.

**Library**

This facility was rated at 2.28, 2.23, and 2.60 which indicates that students sometimes used it and are somewhat satisfied. However, students rated it very important to their education. According to Watson (2001), freshman students perceived the library and its effect on their academic outcomes in a more neutral way. This may hold true to Pohnpei Campus freshman students. Being new to the campus, they may yet explore the facilities that are available in the library.

**Computer Labs**

Students rated the computer labs very highly with ratings at 2.50, 2.45, and 2.60 indicating that they used the facility always, very satisfied with it, and perceived it very important in their studies.

Fairlee (2005) showed that having access to a computer is associated with a higher likelihood of being enrolled in school. Because of good computer labs at Pohnpei Campus with a 1:1 computer-student ratio, all computer classes are full for the whole year round and even government and private company employees come to the campus to take advance computer courses.

**Faculty Performance**

Overall, students are happy with the teaching performance of faculty members at Pohnpei Campus with an average rating of 3.95 from the seven (7) statements pertaining to faculty performance.

Table 6. Students' Perceptions on the Teaching Performance of Faculty

| Faculty Performance | Mean | Descriptive Rating |
|---|---|---|
| Faculty care about me as an individual and are concerned about my academic needs. | 3.88 | Agree |
| The classes I attend are well organized and well taught. | 3.99 | Agree |
| Faculty help students understand program / course requirements. | 4.04 | Agree |
| Courses / subjects are taught in a clear and easy to follow step-by-step manner. | 3.93 | Agree |
| Faculty demonstrate mastery of courses / subjects they teach. | 3.87 | Agree |
| Faculty maintain accurate files on student's progress. | 3.85 | Agree |
| Faculty give proper feedback on my work and show fairness in grading my academic performance. | 4.06 | Agree |
| Pooled Mean: | 3.95 | Agree |

| Mean | Descriptive Rating |
|---|---|
| 4.20 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree |
| 3.40 – 4.19 | Agree |
| 2.60 – 3.39 | Neutral |
| 1.80 – 2.59 | Disagree |
| 1.00 - 1.79 | Strongly Disagree |

Students rated faculty performance with mean value range of 3.85 – 4.06 which indicated that they "agree" on all seven (7) statements that started from (1) faculty cared and were concerned about my academic needs; (2) the classes I attended are well organized and well taught; (3) faculty helped students understand program / course requirements; (4) courses / subjects are taught in a clear easy to follow step-by-step manner; (5) faculty demonstrated mastery of courses / subjects they teach; (6) faculty maintain accurate files on students' progress; and (7) faculty gave proper feedback on my work and had shown fairness in grading my academic performance.

The consistent rating gathered from this survey concurred with what Peterson and Kauchak (1982) stated: "researchers found that student ratings of teachers are consistent among students and reliable from one year to the next." Whilst the data gathered in this survey covered only one semester, it included all faculty members in the entire campus.

## Relationship Between Students' Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Academic Performance

The fourth objective of this study is to determine the relationship between each variable of the students' socio-demographic characteristics and their academic performance. This also answered the first null hypothesis stated as:

"There is no relationship between freshman students' socio-demographic characteristics and academic performance".

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was the statistical method used to analyze the linear relationships between the student socio-demographic characteristics and academic performance as taken from students' final cumulative GPA. Results of Pearson correlations are shown in Table 7.

**Age**

Pohnpei Campus students' age did not correlate with their academic performance. This finding concurred with the results of a study done by Ergul (2004) who studied the relationship between students' age and academic achievement in distance education at Anadolu University.

**Gender**

Correlation analysis from Table 6 yielded a not significant This concurred with previous research studies done by Merculio (1987) and Luangprab (1991) who were both cited by Inocencio (1997) in her study. Similar results also from Walstad and Soper (1989) who stated that gender is not correlated with academic performance.

**Number of Children in the Family**

Results in this study found no significant correlation between number of children in the family and student academic performance. This concurred with Tenebiaje (2009), who found out that there is no significant relationship between number of siblings or family size and students' academic performance despite the status of his respondents coming from monogamous and polygamous families.

**Birth Order**

There was no significant correlation between birth order and student academic . This finding reconfirmed the study done by Tenibiaje (2009) who conducted a study on birth order. Analysis of the data showed no relationship on academic performance.

**English Placement Test Score**

English test score did not correlate with student academic performance from this study. This could probably be attributed to the high percentage of "lower level" English scores of students in the campus.

The finding in this study slightly concurred with Lee and Green (2007) who investigated the relationships between graduate students' placement test scores in English as a second language (ESL) and three measures of academic performance (grade point average [GPA], faculty evaluations, and student self-assessments. Non-significant correlations were found between test scores and GPA.

Table 7. Relationship between Students' Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Academic Performance

| Students Profile Variables | Correlation Coefficient (r) | p value |
|---|---|---|
| Age | .054$^{ns}$ | 0.596 |
| Gender | -.071 $^{ns}$ | .715 |
| Number of Children in the Family | -.037 $^{ns}$ | .715 |
| Birth Order | -.071 $^{ns}$ | .486 |
| English Placement Test Score | .117 $^{ns}$ | 0.253 |
| Math Placement Test Score | .336** | 0.001 |
| COMET Score | .094 $^{ns}$ | 0.596 |

**Legend:**

** - highly significant (p value $\leq$ 0.01)

* - significant (p value $\leq$ 0.05)

$^{ns}$ - not significant ( p value > 0.05)

**Mathematics Placement Test Score**

Math placement test score correlated with students' academic performance. The r value of .336 with a low p value of 0.001 indicated a highly significant linear correlation. This result reconfirmed Smith's and Schumacher's (2005) statement that college mathematics placement exam had some relevance to forecasting the students' grade point averages in their major.

This finding also concurred with Parker (2005) who looked at undergraduate students' math test placement, math courses taken and grades received and persistence toward a degree. It was determined that a students' timely progress toward a four-year degree is influenced by the students' initial score on the mathematics placement exam and by subsequent performance in mathematics courses.

In another development prior to the outcome of this study, the math and science division at Pohnpei Campus conducted a math pre-test to all students. The goal is to find out if students were placed properly at the correct math level. They used unpaired T-Test to treat the data statistically. Results showed there was no significant difference in the math placement level and pre-test scores of students. In other words, students were placed correctly at their proper math level.

**College Entrance Test (COMET) Score**

COMET score of students did not correlate with their academic performance. This slightly concurred with other findings from previous research like Zeise (2005) who posited that the Scholastic Aptitude Test I & II (SAT I, SAT II) and the American College Test

(ACT) all are college entrance test but all three exams have a weak ability to predict academic performance in college.

Based on the aforementioned results and in answer to the first null hypothesis of this study, it was therefore concluded that:

For the freshman students' socio-demographic characteristics (SDC) in terms of age, gender, birth order, number of children in the family, English placement score, and COMET score, the null hypothesis was accepted. There is no relationship between each of these variables and students' academic performance.

For the freshman students' SDC in terms of Math placement score, the null hypothesis was rejected. There was a highly significant correlation between math placement score and students' academic performance.

### Relationship Between Parents'/Guardians' Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Academic Performance

The fifth objective of this study was to determine the relationship between each variable of parents' / guardians' socio-demographic characteristics and academic performance of freshman students. This also answered the second null hypothesis stated as:

There is no relationship between parents'/guardians' socio-demographic characteristics and academic performance.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was the statistical method used to analyze the linear relationships between each variable from parents' socio-demographic characteristics and academic performance as taken from students' final cumulative GPA.

**Educational Attainment of Parents or Guardian**

An evaluation was made on the linear relationship between parents'/guardians' educational attainment and students' academic performance. Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis indicated a statistically significant linear relationship between parents'/guardians' educational attainment and student academic performance, r=0.221, p = 0.028.

The result above concurred to previous research studies of Bowen (1978), Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulus, and Dornbusch (1990), who stated that an abundance of evidence based on major national studies with huge samples indicates a very strong and positive relationship between the education of parents and the measured intelligence, academic achievement, and extracurricular participation of children in school or college.

Table 8. Relationship Between Parents'/Guardians' socio-demographic characteristics and Academic Performance

| **Parents' / Guardians' SDC** | **Correlation Coefficient (r)** | **p-value** |
|---|---|---|
| Parents'/Guardians' Education | .222* | .028 |
| Parents'/Guardians' Occupation | .193 $^{ns}$ | .057 |
| Annual Family Income | .162 $^{ns}$ | .111 |
| Parents'/guardians' support in education | .056$^{ns}$ | .585 |

**Legend:**

**- highly significant (p value ≤ 0.01)
* - significant (p value ≤ 0.05)
$^{ns}$ - not significant (p value >0.05)

**Occupation of Parents or Guardian**

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient of .193 with a p value of .057 did not have a significant correlation between occupation of parents / guardian and academic

performance of students. The result of this study did not concur to the many research studies such as those of Marks (2006), Fuchs, and Woessmann (2004) that have found significant relationship between parents' / guardians' occupation to academic performance.

**Annual Family Income**

The correlation between annual family income and academic performance had a Pearson Correlation Coefficient of .162 and a p value of .111 that was not statistically significant.

Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulus, and Dornbusch (1990) posited that parents of high socioeconomic status background are more likely than parents of low socioeconomic backgrounds to be involved in their children's education. This study, however, did not find any correlation between annual family income and academic performance. This probably can point to the fact that majority (80%) of students avail for financial aid (Pell Grant) from the time they registered for classes.

**Parents'/Guardian's Support in Education**

Despite the good descriptive rating how students perceived their parents / guardian in their parental support in education, the Pearson correlation coefficient at .056 and p value of 0.585 did not correlate with student performance.

Based on the above results, and in answer to the second null hypothesis of this study, it was therefore concluded that:

For the parents' / guardians' socio-demographic characteristics (SDC) in terms of occupation of parents / guardians, annual family income, and parents' guardians' support

in education, the null hypothesis was accepted. There was no relationship between each of these variables and students' academic performance.

For the parents' / guardians' SDC in terms of educational attainment of parents or guardian, the null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant correlation between parents' / guardians' education and students' academic performance.

### Relationship Between School Factors and Academic Performance

The sixth and last objective of this study was to determine the relationship between each variable on school factors in terms school's resources and facilities, and teaching performance of faculty members and students' academic performance. This also answered the third null hypothesis stated as:

There is no relationship between each variable of school factors and academic performance.

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was the statistical method used to analyze the linear relationships between each variable from school factors and academic performance as taken from students' final cumulative GPA.

Table 9. Relationship Between Students' Perceptions on School Characteristics and Academic Performance

| **Perceptions on School's Resources** | **Frequency Correlation Coefficient** | **p value** | **Satisfaction Correlation Coefficient** | **p value** | **Importance Correlation Coefficient** | **p value** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Financial aid and services | -0.013$^{ns}$ | 0.898 | 0.011$^{ns}$ | 0.914 | -0.036$^{ns}$ | 0.725 |
| Academic advising | 0.069$^{ns}$ | 0.501 | ·006$^{ns}$ | 0.951 | 0.037$^{ns}$ | 0.716 |
| Tutorial services | -0.032$^{ns}$ | 0.757 | 0.015$^{ns}$ | 0.879 | 0.056$^{ns}$ | 0.585 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student health services | 0.184 ns | 0.069 | 0.203 * | 0.045 | 0.273 ** | 0.007 |
| Counseling services | 0.112 ns | 0.271 | 0.118 ns | 0.247 | 0.100 ns | 0.328 |
| Facilities | | | | | | |
| Classrooms | -0.009 ns | 0.926 | -0.065 ns | 0.524 | -0.024 ns | 0.818 |
| Toilets | 0.057 ns | 0.579 | 0.080 ns | 0.432 | 0.021 ns | 0.834 |
| Nahs | 0.029 ns | 0.773 | -0.023 ns | 0.820 | .001 ns | 0.994 |
| Bookstore | 0.127 ns | 0.212 | 0.070 ns | 0.495 | 0.191 ns | 0.060 |
| Science Laboratories | 0.204* | 0.044 | 0.166 ns | 0.102 | 0.298** | 0.003 |
| Canteen | -0.039 ns | 0.704 | 0.097 ns | 0.342 | 0.135 ns | 0.185 |
| Sports | -0.016 ns | 0.878 | 0.069 ns | 0.498 | -0.042 ns | 0.682 |
| Student Clubs | -0.037 ns | 0.718 | 0.061 ns | 0.549 | 0.026 ns | 0.796 |
| Library | 0.077 ns | 0.451 | 0.164 ns | 0.107 | 0.057 ns | 0.570 |
| Computer labs | 0.187 ns | 0.066 | 0.172 ns | 0.162 | 0.165 ns | 0.104 |

**Legend:**

**- highly significant (p value ≤ 0.01)
*- significant (p value ≤ 0.05)
ns – not significant (p value >0.05

**Frequency of Use of Educational Resources and Facilities**

As shown on Table 8, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) of 0.204 with a p value of 0.044 was significant for frequency of use for the science laboratories. Cassidy (2007) stated that college's buildings and grounds were the crucial facilities-related factor and Churchill and Iwai (1981) who concluded that the broad use of campus services and facilities can be taken as a measure of student integration in the college community. This indicates that the more frequent use of science laboratories, the better the student can succeed academically.

**Satisfaction in Educational Resources and Facilities**

Results of Pearson correlation yielded value of r = 0.203 and p value of 0.045 which was significant for the student health services. Belch, et al. (2001) reported that higher GPAs and higher rates of persistence were the results from students who were

satisfied with college resources and facilities. This indicates that students' perception about the college's campus health services can affect their academic performance.

**Importance of Educational Facilities and Resources**

Two variables yielded high significant correlations of how students perceive the importance of educational facilities. These are student health services and science laboratories. This concurred with previous studies from Attewell and Battie (1999), Fairlee (2005), Fuchs and Woessmann (2004), Whitmire (2002), Watson (2001), Belch, et al. (2001), and Center for Facilities Research (2006) who stated that college resources and facilities are contributors to students' academic performance.

This indicates that students' perception of the importance of these resources affects their academic performance. This information can also help college administrators to focus on which infrastructure to prioritize when making plans for college buildings for the benefit of students' learning.

**Teaching Performance of Faculty**

One item from among the seven (7) items describing faculty performance correlated with academic performance. The statement that said, "The classes I attend are well organized and well taught", was highly significant with r=0.201 and p value of 0.047. This conformed with Gagne's (1985) conditions of learning as explained in the earlier chapter and was the theory where this study's theoretical framework had been based.

Table 10. Relationship between Teaching Performance of Faculty and Academic Performance

| Teaching Performance of Faculty | Correlation Coefficient (r) | p-value |
|---|---|---|
| Faculty care about me as an individual and are concerned about my academic needs. | $0.060^{ns}$ | 0.556 |
| The classes I attend are well organized and well taught. | 0.201* | 0.047 |
| Faculty help students understand program / course requirements. | $0.136^{ns}$ | 0.181 |
| Courses / subjects are taught in a clear and easy to follow step-by-step manner. | $0.058^{ns}$ | 0.569 |
| Faculty demonstrate mastery of courses / subjects they teach. | $0.139^{ns}$ | 0.173 |
| Faculty maintain accurate files on student's progress. | $0.086^{ns}$ | 0.399 |
| Faculty give proper feedback on my work and show fairness in grading my academic performance. | $0.078^{ns}$ | 0.446 |

**Legend:**
**- highly significant (p value ≤ 0.01)
*- significant (p value ≤ 0.05)
$^{ns}$ – not significant (p value >0.05)

Based on the above results, and in answer to the third and last null hypothesis of this study, it was therefore concluded that: On the use of educational resources and facilities, the null hypothesis is rejected for the variable science laboratories. There is a relationship between science laboratories and academic performance. However, for the other educational resources and facilities, no significant correlations were found, therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

On the satisfaction on educational resources and facilities, the student health services correlated with academic performance, therefore, it can be concluded that for this particular variable, the null hypothesis is rejected. There is a relationship between the perceived satisfaction of students on health services and academic performance.

However, for the other educational resources and facilities, no significant correlations were found, therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

On the importance on educational resources and facilities, the science laboratories correlated with academic performance, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. There is a relationship between science laboratories and academic performance. However, for the other educational resources and facilities, no significant correlations were found, therefore the null hypothesis was accepted.

# SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Summary

This study was conducted to find correlates of freshman students' academic performance at the College of Micronesia-FSM, Pohnpei Campus. A Student Survey Questionnaire (SSQ) was conducted to elicit information that would answer the objectives of the study. This was administered to 98 freshman students during the Fall Semester of 2009. Secondary data from the Students Information System (SIS) were also gathered and analyzed.

### Freshman Students' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Results of the data revealed students' socio-demographic characteristics belonging to a big family with an average of 6 children per household, majority (67.3%) of older group of students (19 and above), later born (79.6%), lower levels of English (90.8%), lower levels of Math (57.1%), and majority (90.8%) of students admitted into the certificate programs.

### Parents'/Guardians' Socio-Demographic Characteristics

For the parents' socio-demographic characteristics, students came from a majority (33.7%) of high school level-educated parents/guardians, working mostly on blue-collared jobs (53%), and earning below 10,000$ (83.7%) as their annual family income. On the scale of 1-5, students perceived their parents with an overall average rating of 3.83 in their educational support which indicated that they "agree" to statements describing parental support in terms of encouraging them to pursue higher education,

helping them in their assignments, providing them proper discipline, understanding financial aid procedures, and their parents' attendance to college functions and activities.

**Perception of Respondents on the School Characteristics**

On the scale of 1-3, students perceived the frequency of use of educational resources and facilities with an average rating of 2.21 (descriptively rated as "sometimes"), were somewhat satisfied with an average rating of 2.22, and rated the importance of school factors at an average of 2.33 which was descriptively rated as somewhat important. On the scale of 1-5, students' perceptions on the teaching performance of faculty had an overall average rating of 3.95 which indicated that they "agree" to all the seven (7) statements describing statements of faculty performance.

**Relationship Between Students' Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Academic Performance**

The highly significant correlation between math and students' performance (r value of .336 with a low p value of 0.001) reconfirmed earlier findings from previous research like the one from Parker (2005) who stated that students' timely progress towards a four-year degree is influenced by the students' initial score on the mathematics placement exam and by subsequent performance in mathematics courses. Likewise to the findings of Smith and Schumacher (2005) who stated that percentage score on a college mathematics placement exam had some relevance to forecasting the students' grade point averages in their major.

Advising students at COM-FSM Pohnpei Campus to give priority to enroll in math courses during the first semester would be beneficial to their success and

completion rates. Unfortunately, in many of the researcher's experience with advising freshman students, they tend to evade math courses and prefer to take other courses instead.

**Relationship Between Parents'/Guardians' Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Academic Performance**

On the educational attainment of parents/guardians, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) value of .222 with a p value of .028 had shown significant correlation. This concurred to previous research studies of Bowen (1978), Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulus, and Dornbusch (1990), who stated that an abundance of evidence based on major national studies with huge samples indicates a very strong and positive relationship between the education of parents and the measured intelligence, academic achievement, and extracurricular participation of children in school or college.

**Relationship Between School Characteristics and Academic Performance**

From the school characteristics, there were three (3) variables found to have correlated with students' performance: (1) science laboratories; (2) student health services; and (3) organization of classes being taught.

Students' perception on the frequency of use for the science laboratories correlated with their GPA and was significant with r=0.204, and p value of 0.044. However, students' satisfaction rating was not significant but their perception on the science laboratories' importance correlated with their GPA and was highly significant at r=0.298, with a p value of 0.003. For the student health services, students' perception in their frequency of use was not significant but looking at their perception in their

satisfaction and importance showed correlation with GPA from significant to highly significant values respectively. For the teaching performance of faculty, the statement "The classes I attend are well organized and well taught" correlated to academic performance. The highly significant correlation between students' perception on the importance of these science laboratories and their GPA deserves more attention to promote what the college administration is presently reiterating, "to enable students what they should do, know, and value".

Students' perception of their satisfaction and importance on student health services correlated with their GPA. This is in contrast with their frequency of use which was not significant. Looking at the descriptive rating of their frequency of use (Table 4), students did not use the health services often. Despite the freshman orientation being done each fall semester, students seem to be unaware of the presence of health services in the campus.

In the statement "the classes I attend are well organized and well taught" (Table 10), students' perceptions on this statement correlated with their academic performance. This finding conformed to the theories of learning by Gagne (1985). Gagne suggested that learning tasks for intellectual skills can be organized in a hierarchy according to complexity: stimulus recognition, response generation, procedure following use of terminology, discriminations, concept formation, rule application, and problem solving.

## Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Most freshman students were mature or belonged to the older group that had a mean age of 19 years – age ranging from 17-23 years old, later born, male, lower levels of English Language and Mathematics placement scores, belonged to a big family of 6 children per household, and mostly admitted into the degree programs.
2. Parents/guardians were mostly working on blue-collared jobs, earning less than 10,000$ annual income, high school-level educated, and students perceived their parents as the one who encouraged them to pursue higher education, helped them in their assignments, provided proper discipline in their college activities, and understood financial aid and college procedures. However, they were neutral in terms of attending to college functions and activities.
3. Students' perceptions on the frequency of use, satisfaction, and importance of school resources and facilities had an average of sometimes, somewhat satisfied, and somewhat important respectively.
4. Results of correlation analysis between students' socio-demographic characteristics and academic performance revealed only the mathematics placement score correlated with academic performance.
5. Results of correlation analysis between parents/guardians' socio-demographic characteristics and academic performance revealed only the

educational attainment of parents/guardians correlated with academic performance.

6. Results of correlation analysis between school characteristics and academic performance revealed that student health services satisfaction and importance, science laboratories satisfaction and importance, and faculty's organization of classes and how they are taught correlated with academic performance.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the recommendations:

1. Review the facilities and services offered to students to determine their actual needs;
2. Develop programs that will provide students better awareness of what the school is offering for them to maximize the use of these services and facilities;
3. Strengthen the guidance and counseling to motivate and encourage students to focus on their academic endeavor;
4. Further research using a larger, more diverse sample might possibly result in different findings than those presented here and should be conducted including other variables such as the impact of culture in education and parents' involvement; and
5. Develop programs/seminars for parents and freshman students to make them aware of the rules and policies of the college.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

PERMISSION LETTER FROM COM-FSM VPIA

College of Micronesia-FSM
Pohnpei Campus
November 20, 2009

Mrs. Jean Thoulag
Vice President for Instructional Affairs
College of Micronesia – FSM
P.O. Box 159, Palikir, Pohnpei
Federated States of Micronesia
FM 96941

Re: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE COM-FSM, VICE PRESIDENT FOR INSTRUCTIONAL AFFAIRS

Dear Jean,

I am in the process of completing a master's thesis at Central Luzon State University – Open University, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija, Philippines (College Website: http://www.openuni-clsu.edu.ph/). The thesis title is: Correlates of academic performance of freshman students at the College of Micronesia-FSM, Pohnpei Campus.

First and foremost, I would like your permission to allow me to conduct pre-testing of the proposed Student Survey Questionnaire (SSQ) to students at COM-FSM. This instrument pre-test activity is intended to gather information regarding the ease or difficulty of answering the questions, time taken to complete the questionnaire, and inputs and suggestions from students and any interested COM-FSM personnel who may want to participate.

Secondly, may I also ask your kind permission to allow me to conduct this research study at COM-FSM, Pohnpei Campus. It is hoped that this study will provide some information in understanding student success and retention – which is the main focus of Pohnpei Campus this school year.

It is planned to conduct the pre-test survey on November 25, 2009 and the final survey on December 2, 2009.

I understand that human subjects are involved in these pre-test and student survey activities. Participants' responses will remain confidential, anonymous, and separate from any identifying information. All identities will be protected in the reporting of results. There will be no list of names from participants in this thesis or any future publication of this study. Data will be aggregated for statistical analysis and summarized for reporting, protecting participants confidentiality at all times.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me in the enclosed return envelope. Thank you very much.

Yours truly,

Pablo H. Lamsis, Jr.

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE REQUEST AS WRITTEN ABOVE:

Jean Thoulag

JEAN THOULAG

Date: 4/24/09

## APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER FROM COM-FSM POHNPEI CAMPUS DIRECTOR

College of Micronesia-FSM
Pohnpei Campus
November 12, 2009

Mrs. Penny Weilbacher
Campus Director
College of Micronesia-FSM
Pohnpei Campus
P.O. Box 614
Pohnpei, FM 96941

RE: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE COM-FSM, POHNPEI CAMPUS DIRECTOR

Dear Penny,

Subsequent to my earlier email messages to you regarding conducting a research study at Pohnpei Campus, I finally decided on my thesis entitled: "CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FRESHMAN STUDENTS AT THE COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA – FSM, POHNPEI CAMPUS". In this regard, may I request your kind guidance, direction, and permission to allow me to conduct this study at Pohnpei Campus. It is hoped that this study will gather important data to allow us to better understand the student population and improve student success and retention rate.

I understand that human subjects are involved in this study. Participants' responses will remain confidential, anonymous, and separate from any identifying information. All identities will be protected in the reporting of results. There will be no list of names from participants in this thesis or any future publication of this study. Data will be aggregated for statistical analysis and summarized for reporting, protecting participants confidentiality at all times.

Further, I would like to inform you also that access to the Student Information Service system is required during the study as detailed on the thesis layout plan. The thesis layout plan will be emailed to you before you receive hard copy of this request letter.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter where indicated below and return it to me in the enclosed return envelope. Thank you very much.

Yours truly,

Pablo H. Lamsis, Jr.

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE REQUEST AS WRITTEN ABOVE:

PENNY WEILBACHER
Date: 11/13/09

## APPENDIX C

REQUEST LETTER TO STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Dear Student,

COM-FSM Pohnpei Campus is interested in listening to their students in its effort to improve its services to the whole student population.

Pohnpei Campus would like to gather your suggestions, ideas, or views in this survey to help us improve our success and retention rates which is the main focus of this campus at present.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS SURVEY. All that are needed are your HONEST answers and views.

If you have any question regarding this survey, please don't hesitate to contact me in person or I can also be reached through phone: 320-5154/1176 or my email: pablojr@comfsm.fm. My office is at the Technology & Trades Division (Automotive/Refrigeration/Air Conditioning Workshops).

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Pablo H. Lamsis, Jr.
COM-FSM
Pohnpei Campus

# APPENDIX D

STUDENT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant,

You were chosen as one of the students who will be participating in this study. Kindly read the questions / statements carefully and provide your honest answers. Please take note that your opinions / answers are all welcome and there are no wrong answers. What is being gathered here is your honest opinion.

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS SURVEY!

Please fill in required blank lines or tick √ wherever you deem as appropriate.

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: Male ___ Female ___
3. Number of children in the family: _____
4. Are you a first born or later born child? First born: ____ Later born: ___ ($2^{nd}$, $3^{rd}$, $4^{th}$, etc…)
5. Please indicate your present major of study. _____
6. Please state the occupation of your parent or guardian.

Father: _____ Mother: _____ Guardian: _____

7. Highest Educational Attainment of Parent or Guardian.

| | 1-Primary | 2-Elementary | 3-High School | 4-Attended College | 5-College Degree | 6-MS/MA/PhD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Father | | | | | | |
| Mother | | | | | | |
| Guardian | | | | | | |

8. Annual Family Income

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less than 10,000$ | 11,000 – 15,000$ | 16,000 - 20,000$ | 21,000 – 25,000$ | 26,000 – 30,000$ | 31,000$ or more |

The following questions request you to answer about your perceptions regarding your parent's or guardian's support on your college education.

| Statement | 1-Strongly Disagree | 2-Disagree | 3-Neutral | 4-Agree | 5-Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. My parents / guardian encourage me to pursue higher education. | | | | | |
| 10. My parents / guardian help me in my assignments. | | | | | |
| 11. My parents / guardian provide proper discipline for my college activities. | | | | | |
| 12. My Parents / Guardian attend college functions, volunteer and/or attend college activities or classes. | | | | | |
| 13. My Parents / Guardian understand the steps needed to apply for college and for financial aid. | | | | | |

This section has three (3) parts. Please answer all three sections, indicating (1) HOW OFTEN you use the following services, (2) HOW SATISFIED you are with the services AT THIS COLLEGE CAMPUS, and (3) HOW IMPORTANT the services are to you.

| | FREQUENCY OF USE | | | SATISFACTION | | | IMPORTANCE | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1-Never | 2-Some times | 3-Always | 1-Not at all | 2-Some what | 3-Very | 1-Not at all | 2-Some what | 3-Very |
| 14. Financial aid and services | | | | | | | | | |
| 15. Academic advising | | | | | | | | | |
| 16. Tutorial services | | | | | | | | | |
| 17. Student health services | | | | | | | | | |
| 18. Counseling services | | | | | | | | | |
| 19. Campus Buildings | | | | | | | | | |
| Classrooms | | | | | | | | | |
| Nahs | | | | | | | | | |
| Bookstore | | | | | | | | | |
| Worskhops | | | | | | | | | |
| Science Labs | | | | | | | | | |
| Canteen | | | | | | | | | |
| 20. Recreational facilities | | | | | | | | | |
| Sports | | | | | | | | | |
| Student Clubs | | | | | | | | | |
| 21. Library | | | | | | | | | |
| 22. Computer Labs | | | | | | | | | |

In your EXPERIENCE AT THIS COLLEGE CAMPUS for the current semester, please indicate your views on instructional effectiveness for the following statements:

| Statement | 1-Strongly Disagree | 2-Disagree | 3-Neutral | 4-Agree | 5-Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23. Faculty care about me as an individual and are concerned about my academic needs. | | | | | |
| 24. The classes I attend are well organized and well taught. | | | | | |
| 25. Faculty help students understand program / course requirements. | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26. Courses / subjects are taught in a clear and easy to follow step-by-step manner. | | | | | |
| 27. Faculty demonstrate mastery of courses / subjects they teach. | | | | | |
| 28. Faculty maintains accurate files on students' progress. | | | | | |
| 29. Faculty give proper feedback on my work and show fairness in grading my academic performance. | | | | | |

THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR VIEWS!

## APPENDIX E

RESEARCHER'S EMAIL COMMUNICATION WITH COM-FSM VPIA

----- Original Message -----
**From:** Jean Thoulag
**To:** 'Pablo Jr. Lamsis' ; 'Jean Thoulag'
**Cc:** 'Penny Weilbacher'
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 25, 2009 9:12 AM
**Subject:** RE: Permission to conduct survey

Dear Pablo,
I will print out your letter, sign and scan return to you via e-mail.
Proceed with your pre test of the survey today.
Jean

**From:** Pablo Jr. Lamsis [mailto:pablojr@comfsm.fm]
**Sent:** Monday, November 23, 2009 2:52 PM
**To:** 'Jean Thoulag'; Jean Thoulag
**Cc:** Penny Weilbacher
**Subject:** Permission to conduct survey
**Importance:** High

Dear Jean,

I've been trying to email you this morning but it seems like we are experiencing internet problems here at Pohnpei Campus.

Let me thank you for the wonderful inputs and suggestions you have shared in the student survey questionnaire during our meeting on Nov. 20, 2009. I have revised the SSQ as we have discussed together with the Letter to Student Participants. The permission letter is also attached for your perusal. Please find all documents here as attached. I'm afraid I missed to include some or probably failed to include some points that we discussed. Your corrections are greatly appreciated.

Kindly let me know if this is okay, I'll have it finalized before coming to see you for your signature.

Thanking you,
Pablo

From: thoulagj@comfsm.fm thoulagj@comfsm.fm
Date: Saturday, November 14, 2009 11:47 PM
To : Pablo Jr. Lamsis pablojr@comfsm.fm
Subject: Re: Permission Request

> HI Pablo,
Thanks for writing and reminding me about this and letting me plan for it
in my schedule. I read your letter and questionnaire. I would like to
talk to you a little bit about it and I think you might want/need to talk
to Jimmy Hicks IRPO as they have just administered a survey that your
questions reduplicate. In any case, let's meet next week when I get back.

Jean

Dear Jean,

>
> Greetings! Praying that this missive comes to you in the best of health
> despite the very busy work schedule and travel that you're now in. My
> apologies too for sneaking in at a time when you're too busy and yet off
> island.
>
>
>
> Jean, this is regarding the master's thesis I told you about after our
> performance budget meeting at PSBDC, Pohnpei Campus lately. After a long
> review by my thesis advisors at the university, they finally gave me the
> go signal to proceed in conducting the said thesis. I have attached the
> request letter for your perusal including the student survey questionnaire
> and request letter to participants. This is to inform you in advance so
> you are informed and know the details before I come and see you later when
> you arrive in Pohnpei.
>
>
>
> Have a great weekend and will see you soon! God bless!
>
>
>
>
>
> Regards,
>
>
>
> Pablo H. Lamsis, Jr.
>